

Seeking Power with Truth

The Role of Evaluation in Parliaments

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Pirmin Bundi

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Prof. Dr. Thomas Widmer (main advisor)
Prof. Dr. Frédéric Varone
Prof. Dr. Silja Häusermann

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Synopsis

1.1 Evaluation in the Post-Truth Era

Interviewer: *"Do you weigh scientific advice in arriving at policy positions?"*

Congressmen: *"We don't. That's ridiculous. You have a general posture, you use the scientist's evidence as ammunition. The idea that a guy starts with a clean slate and weighs the evidence is absurd."*

([Kingdon, 1989](#), 223).

We live in times in which it has never been easier to access information and yet truth seems to be facing its biggest challenge in politics since the evolution of the national state. Recently, an intensive debate on misinformation in the political arena has arisen, in which media and political leaders accuse each other of disseminating so-called *fake news*. Misinformation has always been observable in politics, but the focus lied on the revealing of fake information during political campaigns in order to determine the most trustful political representatives. Lately, public attention has shifted to misinformation in the policy arena. In doing so, multiple cases have occurred where official authorities have - awarely or unawarely - disseminated false information in order to legitimate their policy decisions. Most prominently, the United States introduced an executive order in January 2017, which denied entry to the country to anyone from seven countries, which are mainly populated by Muslims. The authorities argued that the policy's objective was to keep out "radical Islamic terrorists", despite the fact that the country has not been the target of a single terror attack carried out by a citizen of any of the seven listed nationalities

in the last forty years.¹ In the *post-truth*² era, it seems that the use of information has become less self-evident in policy-making decisions than sentiments and emotions. Hence, the question of which role remains for information in politics in this new era arises.

The question of how information, respectively scientifically generated evidence, influences the political arena has kept policy analysts occupied ever since the concept of policy analysis was established. Wildavsky (1979) has prominently addressed this topic in his book *Speaking Truth to Power*, in which he suggests that policy analysis' (the truth) main target is to influence politics (the power). Although the author emphasized that policy analysis should never be the only factor for policy-making, the postulation that evidence has to be utilized has always been present in many studies, in particular in research on evaluation. Wildavsky himself has described this particularly well:

"The earliest substantial manifestation of analysis was evaluation of social programs. The evaluation industry (and it is an industry) employs many more people than have ever been graduated from schools of policy analysis. One thing evaluators learned was that most analysis is rejected by the organizations that sponsor it. But if policy analysis was to have practical importance - intended to be, as it was, an applied subfield - it had not merely to be done but to be used. One way bridging the gap was to develop a specialty called implementation: a parallel effort was devoted to the utilization of policy analysis. Hence emphasis shifted to the political uses and abuses of analysis" (Wildavsky, 1979, xxvi).

Policy evaluations are a major source for policy-makers in order to obtain information on how and whether a policy works. It is not surprising that the phrase *speaking truth to power* was picked up by many notable scholars of research on evaluation (Bussmann,

¹The Economist, January 28th, 2017. "Donald Trump gets tough on refugees". Retrieved from economist.com.

²The Oxford English Dictionary has announced *post-truth* as its word of the year 2016. Post-truth is defined as "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief". Oxford Dictionaries, January, 30th 2017, "The Word of the Year 2016 is...". Retrieved from oxforddictionaries.com.

1996; Chelimsky, 2001; Leeuw and Furubo, 2008; Patton, 2008; Eliadis et al., 2011; Head, 2013). Several studies indeed show that evaluations are used by public administrations in order to improve policies, sometimes more, sometimes less (Weiss and Bucuvalas, 1980; Balthasar, 2007; Frey and Widmer, 2011; Frey, 2012; Ledermann, 2012). However, the same does not apply to the parliamentary arena. Former studies show that the use of evaluations in parliaments is extremely moderate (Whiteman, 1985; Weiss, 1989; Boyer and Langbein, 1991; Hird, 2009; Bogenschneider et al., 2013; Eberli, 2017). If members of parliaments use evaluations, then they tend to use them symbolically, rather than conceptually or instrumentally (see citation of Kingdon (1989) in the beginning). Moreover, evaluations are hardly ever influential, but when they are, then they have an impact on the dynamics within the decision-making of the parliament and do not affect the actual policy outcome (Malen et al., 1988). To sum up, previous research shows that the relationship of evaluations and parliaments can hardly be described as *speaking truth to power*.

Yet somehow, evaluations have found their way into the parliament. In 1999, Switzerland introduced the article 170 in the federal constitution, which urges the Federal Assembly to evaluate the government's measures regarding their effectiveness or efficiency (Widmer, 2007, 76). Moreover, France has adopted a similar law, which urges the National Assembly to evaluate policies (Barbier, 2010, 45). In addition, some parliaments have devoted the production of evaluations to specific units. Again, in the early 1990s the Federal Assembly established a unit - Parliamentary Control of the Administration - that conducts evaluations on behalf of the parliament (Bussmann, 2007). According to (Jacob et al., 2015, 20), other countries, such as Australia, Sweden and France, have also developed similar units, which conduct several evaluations for their parliaments every year. Although there is a growing institutionalization of evaluations in the parliaments, previous literature has hardly ever analyzed to what extent evaluations are demanded by parliaments: the existence of evaluations seems to be an axiom that is taken to be true in order to serve as a starting point for further research. As a consequence, previous studies fail to present a compelling conceptual framework to explain why parliaments demand

evaluations. What drives members of parliament to demand evaluations, despite the fact that there does not seem to be any particular interest in using the findings to enlighten themselves? This thesis takes up this question and deals with three different puzzles.

The first puzzle deals with the evaluation demand of the members of parliament. Although some authors have raised the topic (Toulemonde, 1999; Widmer, 2008a; Zollinger, 2009; Pattyn, 2014a), the main reasons why evaluations are demanded still remains unclear, in contrast to the rich literature on the use of evaluations (Shulha and Cousins, 1997; Weiss, 1998; Kirkhart, 2000; Alkin and Taut, 2002; Henry and Mark, 2003; Patton, 2008; Johnson et al., 2009; Alkin, 2012). If literature deals with the demand for evaluations, the authors have often focused on the public administration (Widmer et al., 2001; Balthasar, 2007; Askim, 2009). In addition, only few scholars empirically analyze the reasons why an evaluation is commissioned. While Balthasar and Rieder (2009) analyze the diffusion process of the evaluation activity between the Swiss cantons, Pattyn (2014a) investigates the motivation for conducting evaluation reports for the Flemish public sector. Some studies focus on the evaluation activity of a certain policy field, e.g. foreign affairs (Widmer, 2008a) or health (Balthasar, 2010). However, the parliament is often excluded from these analyses, albeit their members request numerous evaluations every year and they are regarded as important stakeholders of evaluations (Pollitt, 2006; Vedung, 2010). Thus, we barely know anything about their real motivation behind demanding evaluation reports. What are the main factors that influence the parliamentarians to seek evaluations?

The second puzzle deals with the evaluation strategies of the parliamentarians. Previous evaluation literature has not only failed to provide reasons for parliaments to demand evaluations, but also to explain which purpose members of parliament pursue when they demand an evaluation. Studies on evaluation use suggest that members of parliament prefer evaluations, which confirm their own opinions. Hence, parliamentarians tend to seek evaluations, which support their argumentation, rather than to provide an information basis in order to make a decision (Alkin, 1973; Whiteman, 1985; Weiss, 1998; Bogenschneider et al., 2013; Eberli, 2016). Generally, several studies have analyzed the strategic use of

knowledge (Majone, 1989; Radaelli, 1995; Boswell, 2009). These articles argue that decision makers tend to use scientific reports for legitimacy, rather than to improve a policy measure. However, the studies are mainly based on the public administration, whereas the goals for parliaments to demand such reports still remain unclear. As a consequence, little is known about the strategic use of knowledge in the parliamentary arena, especially of evaluations. What purposes do parliamentarians pursue when they demand an evaluation?

Finally, the last puzzle deals with the evaluation demand of members of parliament across the policy fields. In literature, it is often argued that the evaluation demand varies between the policy fields. Several studies indeed show an unequal distribution of policy evaluations across policy fields (Balthasar, 2007; Widmer, 2008b; Widmer et al., 2009; Zollinger, 2009; Pattyn, 2014b; Jacob et al., 2015; Frey et al., 2016). In doing so, most studies suggest that the different attributes of policy fields influence the differences between them. However, the studies focus on the administration as well as the institutional differences within the public administration. In regard to the parliamentary arena, Speer et al. (2015) argue that parliamentarians clearly have a varying preference as to in which policy field they demand an evaluation. However, there is no empirical study, which includes all policy fields in one comprehensive study. The literature mainly provides theoretical arguments and selects only certain policy fields. These circumstances lead to a substantial academic void that has not yet been investigated. Why do the members of parliament demand evaluations more frequently in certain policy fields than in others?

These three puzzles show that the real scope of the parliamentary evaluation demand has neither been captured nor explained by the existing literature. This thesis presents an analytical framework for evaluation demand in the parliament by combining the rich literature on legislative studies and research on evaluation. Previous studies have either neglected parliamentary theories, as they did not focus on parliaments (evaluation literature) or they were simply not aware of policy evaluations (parliamentary literature). Although those lines of research have often investigated similar issues, communication between them has been scarce.

This thesis bases its analysis on the example of the subnational and federal parliaments of Switzerland. There are many reasons to investigate the role of evaluation in these parliaments. First, although Switzerland has often been called an *evaluation latecomer* by some authors (Horber-Papazian, 1990; Spinatsch, 2002), most authors agree that Switzerland currently has one of the most developed institutions regarding evaluations amongst contemporary democracies (Jacob and Varone, 2004; Widmer et al., 2009; Sager et al., 2017). This is especially true for the importance of evaluation in the parliament (Jacob et al., 2015). On the one hand, evaluations have been implemented at the federal level with the introduction of Art 170 in the federal constitution, which was adopted by most cantons (Horber-Papazian, 2007). On the other hand, the Federal Assembly has its own unit with the Parliamentary Control of the Administration, which conducts evaluations for them. Moreover, there are ambitions to introduce such units at the cantonal level as well (Eberli and Bundi, 2017, 249).

1.2 Outline of the Argument

In order to explain the demand for evaluations, one has to study how political science explains the evolution of institutions. In this thesis, I propose a theoretical framework that is mostly based on rational choice institutionalism. According to Hall and Taylor (1996, 946-950), rational choice institutionalism has evolved from the studies of American congressional behavior in order to explain how institutions were generated. The authors explain the evolution of institutions by referring to the benefits, which the members of the parliament gain from the establishment of the institution. In doing so, institutions are arrangements by choice, which result from the recurring interactions of the parliamentarians. As a consequence, the evaluation becomes an institution if the members of parliament frequently demand them; most scholars refer to the establishment of such an institution as *evaluation culture* (Owen, 2003; Bustelo, 2006; Patton, 2008; Preskill and Boyle, 2008). Therefore, the questions arise of what benefits the evaluation provides for the members of parliament, so that they have an incentive to ask for them frequently.

Subsequently, this thesis argues that members of parliament demand evaluations in order to win power over the government. In contemporary democracies, the policy process is determined by a delegation of tasks, which involves multiple agents and principals (Strøm, 2000). In doing so, parliamentarians delegate the implementation of policies - for which they were elected by their constituency - to the government with its agencies. This process results in a series of common-agency problems for parliaments and governments, as the members of parliament - as the principal - cannot be sure whether the government and its agencies implemented the policies in the way they were intended (McCubbins, 2014). Hence, parliamentarians have strong incentives to control the government. Depending on the institutional settings, the members of parliament have different approaches as to how they can oversee the implementation process of the agencies (Lupia, 2003; Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2012).

Although most parliaments have a rich variety of instruments to control the government, their efficient use is often restricted due to limited resources (time, personal assistants, party offices). According to McCubbins and Schwartz (1984), parliamentarians thus prefer *fire-alarm oversight* over *police-patrol oversight*. While police-patrol oversight is centralized, active and directly executed by the parliamentarians (e.g. reading documents, monitoring agency activities, holding hearings), fire-alarm oversight involves less parliamentary resources than the former model. Instead of systematically checking for violations of legislative goals, the members of parliament established a system of practices that allows the civil society to examine the administration's work. As a consequence, the importance of oversight approaches, which allow members of parliament to conserve their resources, has increased. For example, Martin and Rozenberg (2014) show that the parliamentary requests were more frequently used in the last couple of years.

The thesis argues that parliamentarians demand evaluations in order to fulfill their oversight function, as they provide them with unique conditions for parliamentary oversight: Evaluation demands by parliamentary requests delegate the commission to the responsible agency, which assesses the effectiveness or efficiency of a policy, and then pro-

vides a final report including an executive summary as well as recommendations for the members of the parliament. In other words, members of parliament can delegate the oversight function to the agencies themselves, but nevertheless have some certainty that the evaluations are conducted independently, since they are most often delegated to evaluation specialists, who do not belong to the public administration (Balthasar, 2007; Dolder et al., 2017). This is especially important in Switzerland, as the power of the parliaments is restricted by two factors. On the one hand, the members of parliament have limited resources. They are characterized by a low degree of professionalization, since most of the parliamentarians pursue an occupation next to their parliamentary mandate, including those at the federal level (Bütikofer, 2014; Bundi et al., 2017). Moreover, the parliaments also lack institutional resources (e.g. personal assistants, small parliamentary services) that hinder parliamentary oversight. On the other hand, the parliaments are confronted with strong governments, which, with the exemption of the Federal Council, are directly elected by the people and cannot be dissolved with a vote of non-confidence. Above all, the direct democratic institutions restrict the power of the parliaments significantly (Vatter, 2008). Since all these factors restrain the power of parliaments in Switzerland, evaluations offer members of parliaments a worthwhile instrument to be requested.

This argumentation can be subdivided into three steps. First, the motivation of parliamentarians to demand an evaluation depends on their individual characteristics and the institutional context. Some members of parliament are more likely to demand evaluations, as they have a more positive attitude towards evaluations and are more aware of the oversight function of the parliament. These are often members in oversight committees, who have served in the parliament longer and more frequently engage in the leadership boards of the parliament. Furthermore, institutional settings shape the context in which the parliamentarians execute their parliamentary mandate. In doing so, the parliamentarians' attitude towards evaluation can be affected by an evaluation policy (evaluation clause) that urges the parliament to ensure that the government's implemented measures are evaluated (e.g. Article 170 of the federal constitution).

The second step consists of the evaluation's strategies that a member of parliament pursues when demanding an evaluation. Independently of the parliamentarians' predisposition to demand evaluations, a specific strategy is always pursued with an evaluation. In doing so, evaluations can serve different purposes by providing information about a specific policy. On the one hand, depending on the parliamentarians' openness towards the evaluation results, they can demand an evaluation to oppose or support a policy if they can already anticipate the evaluation's findings. On the other hand, parliamentarians can demand an evaluation as a source of information, in case they have not yet formed an opinion about a policy. This differentiation is based on the different types of instrumental and conceptional evaluation use (Rich, 1977; Weiss, 1989; Alkin and King, 2016). However, the motivation behind these strategies is mainly based on the goal of being re-elected or else to achieve better policy outcomes. Depending on their allocation in the parliament, members of parliament will pursue different strategies. While parliamentarians from legislative committees focus on policy advocacy in order to oppose an existing policy, parliamentarians from oversight committees demand evaluations in order to obtain information.

Last, the parliamentarians' evaluation demand is also shaped by the context of the policy, the policy field. Policy fields cover a certain amount of policies, which try to solve similar problems of the society. In doing so, they are shaped by different public and private actors, resources and varied perceptions by the voters. As a consequence, policy fields differ in their nature and possess different requirements for accountability. While some policy fields are less established and are questioned less frequently by voters and members of parliament, they are more often the targets of policy evaluations. These differentiations arise from different attributes of policy fields. In doing so, mainly two attributes affect the accountability of a policy field. On the one hand, the extent of delegation implies how often public activities are delegated to civil organizations and thus how accessible the policy fields are for parliamentary oversight. On the other hand, the need for legitimation describes the level of acceptance of the activities of a policy field

and influences the parliamentarians' motivation to demand an evaluation. In addition, the policy fields' closeness to science might also be important, as it is crucial whether an evaluation can be conducted at all (e.g. existence of policy experts, feasibility to measure outcomes).

To sum up, the parliamentary demand for evaluation depends on the individual parliamentarians' characteristics and their institutional settings, the strategy they pursue, and the context in form of the policy field. These factors affect how parliamentarians perceive their oversight function, respectively how intensively they perform their oversight role.

1.3 Summary of Findings

The findings can be divided along the three articles.³ The first article considers the question of why parliamentarians demand evaluations with parliamentary requests. The basis of the study is an online survey amongst the cantonal and federal members of parliament. The quantitative analysis shows that Swiss parliamentarians demand more evaluations if they have the impression that the administration is not implementing the policies within their meaning. Furthermore, parliamentarians who are members of an oversight committee or the parliamentary board are more likely to demand an evaluation. In addition, the more positive the attitude towards evaluations, the higher the probability that a member of parliament will demand an evaluation. Hence, the finding suggests that parliamentarians demand evaluations in order to fulfill their oversight function towards the government.

The second article considers the question of which strategies parliamentarians pursue when they use parliamentary requests demanding an evaluation. The article's finding relies on twelve case studies of parliamentary requests from the Swiss parliament. The qualitative analysis shows that parliamentarians of legislative committees submit parliamentary requests to oppose a policy, but they do not seek an evaluation to support a certain policy.

³The articles can be found after this synopsis. I have made two modifications from the published version in order to make the thesis more coherent. On the one hand, I left out the abstract in the beginning of the respective article. On the other hand, I have integrated the references of all articles in one chapter at the end of the thesis. Moreover, Tables 3.3 and 3.4 of the second articles are located in the Appendix, while they were mistakenly placed in the main text in the published version.

In contrast, parliamentarians of oversight committees submit parliamentary requests to obtain information on specific policies. Moreover, the party membership of the responsible Federal Councillor does not influence the evaluation strategy. These findings suggest that parliamentarians use evaluations as an instrument to achieve their individual aims rather than using the actual findings of evaluations for the legislation.

The third article investigates how attributes of policy fields influence the members of parliament in their evaluation demand in a policy field. The empirical analysis of the article is based on the same parliamentary survey that the first articles uses, and is supplemented by an expert survey amongst Swiss political scientists in order to obtain data on the attributes of policy fields. The quantitative analysis shows that parliamentarians are more likely to demand an evaluation in those policy fields where cooperative forms of governance are more present, since those policies are more difficult to assess and have a higher need of legitimation. The study suggests that parliamentarians seek more control in a policy field, where public activities are more often delegated to non-public actors or the need for legitimation is particularly high. Furthermore, both effects increase with the policy field's closeness to science, which alludes that the supply of an evaluation has to be ensured before they are commissioned.

1.4 Contribution

Numerous studies either put evaluations or parliaments in the center of their investigation, but only few studies have combined both research objectives and searched for the role of evaluations in parliaments. This thesis investigates the importance of evaluations by investigating the reasons of why members of parliament request them. In doing so, the thesis makes four theoretical contributions to research on evaluation and presents new empirical and methodological approaches to study the legislative-executive relations in contemporary democracies.

The first theoretical contribution is the conceptualization of the evaluation demand in politics. In order to understand why the origin of evaluations has rarely been investigated

so far, one has to take a look back to the history of research on evaluation. Research on evaluation started to grow in the 1960s, when scholars started to think about how to improve the US-federal curricula (Cronbach, 1963; Scriven, 1967; Stake, 1967). Subsequent researchers conceptualized evaluation as applied research with the central purpose of usefulness (Weiss, 1977; Wholey, 1979). This tradition continued and peaked during the late 1990s and early 2000s when scholars asked about the utilization, usability, and influence of evaluations in the decision-making process (Weiss, 1998; Kirkhart, 2000; Henry and Mark, 2003; Mark and Henry, 2004; Christie, 2007; Patton, 2008). At the same time, the concept of evidence-based policy making was developed, which proclaimed that all decisions should be based on what works (Davis et al., 2000; Pawson, 2006). To sum up, research on evaluation always had a focus on the aspects of learning, especially since many of the researchers work as independent evaluators for authorities, which usually commission the evaluations and are interested in improving the policy. However, this bias in evaluation use is the reason why we still know very little about why evaluations are conducted. This is where this thesis steps in, as it provides a theoretical conceptualization of evaluation demand and suggests empirical explanations of the causes of the evaluation demand in the parliamentary arena.

The second theoretical contribution is the distinction of different types of actors who have an interest in an evaluation and the identification of those who are not primarily learners, but also controllers. The previous paragraph showed that research on evaluation has mainly focused on its use. However, most studies found that the use of evaluation is often rather limited, as Weiss (1999, 477) describes particularly clearly:

"Evaluators find it hard to understand why policy makers do not listen to evaluation results seriously and do their best to implement them in future decisions about policy and program."

This is partly the result of the researchers' omission to ask about the different needs of the actors. While program planners of agencies, for instance, are interested in improving a

policy and thus are often included in the evaluation process, parliamentarians as legislators have a stronger interest in knowing how the policy was implemented by the administration and whether it shows the intended effects. According to [Borrás and Højlund \(2015, 114\)](#), evaluation's learners are mainly program units and external evaluators, but not organizational and external stakeholders. In this thesis, I argue that members of parliament - often considered as stakeholders of evaluations - are more interested in summative than in formative aspects of evaluations. While the latter concentrates on the improvement of the evaluation object, the former indicates whether the objective has reached its intended goals ([Scriven, 1967, 62](#)). Hence, this thesis shows that research on evaluation might benefit from the differentiation of the actor's perspective in the study of the role of evaluations in the decision-making process.

The third theoretical contribution of the thesis is to explain parliamentary oversight on the basis of the individual behavior of the parliamentarians, instead of relying on the parliamentary oversight institutions. During the 20th century, there was a long period of time in which literature focused on the role of the parliament as an institution and it has been argued that the parliaments' influence as such has declined ([Martin et al., 2014](#)). On the one hand, it is argued that the growth of the welfare state after the Second World War has led to an expansion of government activities, which exacerbate the information asymmetry between the parliament and the agencies as well as causing the isolation of the government from the parliament ([Immergut, 1992](#)). On the other hand, some authors have argued that the increase of international cooperation (e.g. within the European Union) has led to an erosion of parliamentary oversight over the government ([Andersen and Burns, 1996](#); [Raunio, 1999](#)). More recently, studies have revised this picture by illustrating how parliaments have reacted to win the challenge of both early involvement and information rights ([Raunio, 2005](#); [Strøm et al., 2006](#); [Saalfeld, 2005](#); [Karlas, 2011](#); [Winzen, 2012](#)). However, there has been a lack of information regarding the motivation for individual parliamentarians to fulfill their oversight function. By using the example of evaluations as a mechanism of parliamentary oversight, this thesis shows that oversight institutions are

not a necessary factor for members of parliament to execute control, since they can use other tools. Thus, the thesis illustrates that individual characteristics of parliamentarians have an important influence on whether members of parliament will pursue parliamentary oversight.

The fourth and final contribution of the thesis is to bring back the idea that policy fields can shape the behavior of parliamentarians as a contextual factor. Already forty years ago, [Lowi \(1972\)](#) argued that policies can also determine politics. In brief, the author distinguishes between different types of policies that shape the political arena by influencing the relationships between the political actors. In doing so, Lowi's idea was enthusiastically applied in public policy research, but he was also harshly criticized by several scholars ([Kjellberg, 1977](#); [Spitzer, 1987](#)). It was argued that the political consequences cannot be directly deducted from the policy typology, since the context of the policy-setting also has to be taken into account. However, Lowi's study called attention to the differences between policies and the policy fields. Yet only little attention has been paid to the comparison across policy fields, although the importance of policy fields has widely been discussed in public policy literature ([Sabatier, 1998](#); [Baumgartner and Jones, 2010](#)). Moreover, only few lessons were drawn in order to understand the behavior of parliaments. This thesis demonstrates that the attributes of policy fields influence the parliamentary arena by giving incentives to oversee some areas more than others. Thus, legislative behavior is not only based on individual and contextual characteristics, but it can be influenced by the nature of a policy field.

Furthermore, the thesis makes several empirical and methodological contributions, which facilitate the analysis of legislative-executive relations. Empirically, the thesis presents new data on different research areas. First, the parliamentary survey *ParlEval* provides information on how members of parliament use evaluations in the fulfillment of their parliamentary mandate ([Eberli et al., 2014](#)).⁴ Second, an elite survey amongst Swiss political scientists generated data on policy fields' attributes, which, up to now, has

⁴For detailed methodological information about the ParlEval survey see ([Bundi et al., 2014](#)).

never been collected before. Both surveys were able to generate substantial response rates (55.5% respectively 69.9%), which are a decent rate for elite surveys (Bailer, 2014). The surveys follow a long tradition of parliamentary surveys in Switzerland (Kerr, 1981; Riklin and Möckli, 1991; Krüger et al., 2001; Feh Widmer, 2015; Bütikofer, 2014; Strebel, 2014). Last, the thesis presents empirical evidence from structure-guided interviews with parliamentarians, which provide new insight in the motivation and purposes of parliamentary requests at the federal level. Methodologically, the thesis uses both quantitative large-N statistical analysis, as well as qualitative small-N case studies. Both strategies of analysis have advantages, but they also lack in power of analysis in certain aspects, which is why the combination of both can improve the strength of the empirical analyses (Bennett and Elman, 2006). While quantitative studies give evidence about the behavior of a high number of parliamentarians, they tend to be vague on the specific motivations for members of parliament. In contrast, qualitative studies provide insight into the reasoning of individual parliamentarians, but they cannot guarantee whether those reasons also apply for other members of parliament. The thesis uses both approaches and can provide evidence not only on many variables that might foster evaluation demand, but also on the mechanism of the parliamentarian’s motivation to ask for evaluations.

1.5 Implications

This thesis analyzes the evaluation demand by the Swiss parliaments. Despite the particularities of the political system, the Swiss case provides important implications for other cases. In general, one can distinguish between implications for the evaluation demand outside the parliamentary arena and for the evaluation demand of parliaments outside Switzerland. Moreover, there are several implications for evaluation practice.

First of all, the findings of the thesis provide some insight to why evaluations are demanded. Nowadays, most democracies make substantial efforts in order to assess the effectiveness of their policies. Hence, a multitude of evaluations are commissioned every year, in which the public administration is responsible for most of them (Balthasar, 2007;

Jacob et al., 2015). In doing so, agencies might either conduct an evaluation on behalf of the parliament or the government, or due to an evaluation clause in the law that calls for them (Wirths, 2016). However, agencies often also decide to conduct an evaluation independently of the public administration. Zollinger (2009, 85-86; 111-116) shows that authorities indeed consciously generate evaluations. In doing so, the author shows that the attributes of the policy field, an intense conflict over the choice of policy, as well as high costs for the policy's implementation were decisive factors for agencies to assess the effectiveness of a policy. Moreover, the purpose of the evaluation is often to improve a policy, but sometimes evaluations are also commissioned in order to legitimize a measure at a later decision making stage (e.g. the parliamentary arena). These findings show that evaluations are not commissioned for the evaluation's sake, but that there are mostly strategic motives behind the evaluation demand. While parliamentarians tend to demand evaluations for oversight reasons, agencies conduct evaluations in order to improve the policy, but also to legitimate it. This thesis shows that members of parliament seek evaluations in order to control the agencies and indicates that agencies seek evaluations to react to the parliamentarians' need for accountability. By commissioning evaluation reports, agencies can legitimate their resources and show that the policies, which were implemented, are effective.

Second, the analysis provides implications about the parliament's evaluation demand in other countries. The studies of Speer et al. (2015) and Zwaan et al. (2016) illustrate that other parliaments also demand evaluations with parliamentary requests. On the one hand, Speer et al. (2015) argue that members of parliament frequently ask for evaluations for the German Bundestag and the Flemish Parliament in order to hold the government accountable. Most noticeably, the distribution of the evaluation demand varies significantly across policy fields. On the other hand, Zwaan et al. (2016) illustrates that members of the European Parliament often demand evaluations with parliamentary questions, especially in order to demonstrate the Commission's shortcomings. As this thesis has argued that members of parliament demand evaluations in order to fulfill their oversight function, the

findings imply that other parliamentarians will also pursue this strategy. However, the oversight institution and capacities of parliaments differ substantially across the parliaments, which is why they might use other instruments than a parliamentary request. If parliamentarians have strong oversight institutions, they might choose to scrutinize the agencies' work within those institutions, e.g. by commissioning an evaluation. In contrast, if parliamentarians have weak oversight institutions - as does the example of Switzerland in this thesis - parliamentarians might use the possibility of parliamentary requests to demand evaluations. In any case, evaluations provide an instrument for the members of parliament to control the government. However, this thesis implies that parliamentarians have to be aware of the instrument of an evaluation and that their members must be sensitized for the oversight function, so that they will demand evaluations.

Finally, the thesis provides several implications for evaluation practice. First and foremost, the results show that parliamentarians are indeed interested in evaluations, even though this may not be in the same way that most evaluators think of. If the evaluators, but also agencies, which are often the commissioners of an evaluation, are interested in increasing the relevance of evaluations for members of parliament, they must design the evaluations differently. At the moment, evaluations are often commissioned with a focus on learning (Sanderson, 2002; Balthasar, 2007; Dolder et al., 2017). Parliamentarians do not prefer summative evaluations per se, but they expect at least some information on accountability in the evaluation. Second, parliamentarians are often not aware of the existence of an evaluation. The thesis shows that whilst members of parliament ask for evaluations, they tend to be less interested in the results and the report. This partly has its roots in the defective communication of evaluation results. According to Eberli and Bundi (2017), most members of parliament read evaluation reports. However, most evaluations are discussed within the agencies and only occasionally with other members of the parliament. A way to make parliamentarians more aware of evaluations would be to invite them to the external group that accompanies the evaluation process in a more consistent manner. Third, the thesis shows that parliamentarians do not demand evaluations

in order to use their results, but rather to oversee the agencies' implementation process. Weiss (1999) argues that decision-makers do not only base their decisions on information, but also on ideology, interest, and institutions. Evaluation practice often automatically assumes that evaluations need to be utilized in order to be relevant. However, the findings of this thesis imply that evaluations can also have a high importance in the parliamentary arena without directly being used.

1.6 Conclusion

Against all the previous research on evaluation that has been done in the last fifty years, this thesis argues, that the main question is not whether and how members of parliament use evaluations, but why they demand evaluations. The role of evaluation in the post-truth era is not to *speak truth to power*; instead it is *seeking power with truth*, as the parliamentarians demand evaluations in order to gain power towards the government.

Seeking power refers to the ongoing institutional fight of parliaments against their insignificance. Members of parliament have to face two main challenges nowadays. First, politics happen more and more internationally due to increasing globalization. Thus, intergovernmental institutions, such as the European Union, the United Nations or the International Monetary Fund have gained influence. This does not necessarily mean that decisions are made by or within those institutions, but that the interaction between governments has increased, which is why governments have a more dominant role in policy-making than they used to. Second, the amount of available information has exponentially risen with the development of modern technologies. The Internet provides us with all sorts of information - statistics, reports, data, analyses - at all times. While the government has specialists in the form of public servants, who focus on certain areas and brief the members of the government with the most relevant information they need to know, members of parliament do not possess the same amount of resources. As a consequence, the governments' temporary dominant role has led to parliaments, whose members fear the loss of their power.

In contrast, *truth* refers to the means of the parliament to turn back the power shift towards them. Parliamentarians have mainly increased their oversight capacities due to the recent developments in their power loss (Winzen, 2012; Cheneval et al., 2015). There is nothing like truth in politics, but there is more than just purely ideology. Evaluations are a form of *truth* that constitute a scientific service, which systematically and transparently assess an objective (Widmer and DeRocchi, 2012, 11), which is why there consequently should be no discussion on the results of an evaluation. However, political actors often do not agree about the interpretation of the findings, which might lead to the misuse of evaluations. Cousins (2004, 392) distinguishes between different forms of evaluation misuse: Evaluations can either not be applied by being misused (mistaken and mischievous use) as well as unjustly not used (abuse), and justly not used (rational and political non-use). In addition, Frey (2012, 64) differs between analytical and political rationality when using evaluations. While the former has the aim to improve the outcome of the policy by incorporating the results of an evaluation, the latter seeks to delay a policy or to convince other actors. Since there is no agreement about the interpretation of an evaluation, the findings might be called *alternative facts*⁵, depending on the view of the individual member of parliament. Thus, parliamentarians use evaluations in the way that an evaluation could suit them for the achievement of their political goals: *Seeking power with truth*.

The thesis provides new theoretical and empirical insights in an area that, up to now, has hardly been investigated. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that the thesis cannot provide an answer to all questions, which may be asked. First, the design of the analysis is cross-sectional, which does not allow any statement regarding developments over time. There are many advantages, which cross-sectional studies may provide. In this thesis, a cross-sectional design was more promising regarding the data quality, as retrospective data often entails validity problems (Bernard et al., 1984). This is even more

⁵The phrase *alternative facts* was first used by Kellyanne Conway during an interview, in which she defended White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer's false statement about the attendance at Donald Trump's inauguration as President of the United States. Blake, J. January 22, 2017. "Kellyanne Conway says Donald Trump's team has 'alternative facts.' Which pretty much says it all", retrieved from [washingtonpost.com](https://www.washingtonpost.com).

relevant in the young field of evaluation that is still developing in politics. Second, the analysis entails limited information about the influence of third parties on the evaluation demand. In Switzerland, third parties traditionally have a strong influence on the Swiss political system due to its militia character. The thesis suggests that third parties (e.g. interest groups) might influence members of parliament to demand evaluations. Interest groups are often the main addressees of policies and provide parliamentarians with expertise in order to make decisions. Hence, interest groups might either foster empirical evidence or try to prevent the spread of a new analysis. Third, the thesis deals little with the perspective of the government. It is assumed that the government and its agencies are the strong counterparts of the parliament, but simply implement the evaluation demand of the parliamentarians. If the members of parliament really demand evaluations in order to (re-)gain power over the government, then the government should be aware of this situation and filibuster such evaluation requests. The government might either argue against an evaluation in the response to the parliamentary request, or it can realize the evaluation in its favor, since its authorities are often responsible in implementing the evaluation.

After more than fifty years of research, the relationship between knowledge and politics is still not defined after all. This thesis is able to provide strong empirical evidence in order to identify the role of evaluation in parliaments. However, many questions are still open, which need to be answered by future research in order to understand how information sources, such as evaluations, are used in the parliamentary arena. I hope that this thesis might encourage other scholars in research on evaluation to start thinking about the origins of evaluations.

Article I

What Do We Know About the Demand for
Evaluation? Insights from the Parliamentary Arena

American Journal of Evaluation, 2016, 37(4): 522-541.

2.1 Introduction

In the last twenty years, the importance of evaluations has increased worldwide, which can be observed due to their rising institutionalization (Fouquet and Méasson, 2009; Barbier and Hawkins, 2012; Jacob et al., 2015). In times of recession and austerity, evaluations are an important information source for policy makers in order to estimate the effectiveness and efficiency of public expenses (Leeuw, 2009; Frey and Widmer, 2011).¹ Considered as an academic service, evaluations assess government actions systematically and transparently and contribute to the successful operation of the state in various ways (Widmer and DeRocchi, 2012, 14,27). Unsurprisingly, Dahler-Larsen (2012) argues that we live in the age of evaluation.

Even though governments spend a considerable amount of financial resources for evaluations every year, the question about the origin of evaluations has rarely been investigated so far, since research on evaluation has mainly focused on the use of evaluation (Whiteman, 1985; Cousins and Leithwood, 1986; Weiss, 1987,9,9; Kirkhart, 2000; Alkin and Taut, 2002; Henry and Mark, 2003; Balthasar, 2007; Askim, 2008; Johnson et al., 2009; Askim, 2009; Frey and Widmer, 2011). Within the political system, the parliament is an important demander of evaluations, as evaluations are particularly useful for members of parliament. On the one hand, evaluations provide information for the legislation in order to make a decision (Weiss, 1989; Christie, 2003, 9). The evaluation reports contain information either about what consequences policies have or what policies work.² On the other hand, evaluations help parliaments to fulfill their oversight function towards the government (Lees, 1977; Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2012; Bättig and Schwab, 2015). Consequently, recent

¹In literature, it is widely discussed, which role evaluations played during the financial crisis. While some authors see an increasing amount of evaluations due to the austerity, others argue that evaluations do not seem to have helped policy makers to solve the dilemma of spending (Marra, 2013; Curristine and Flynn, 2013, 126).

²Retrospective evaluations are well discussed in the context of evidence-based-policy-making (EBPM). According to EPBM, evidence should take the center stage in the decision-making process in order to make more effective policies (Davis et al., 2000). In contrast, prospective evaluations as *Regulatory Impact Assessments* appraise policies ex ante in order to inform decision-makers. As such evaluations predict and evaluate the consequences of an intended public policy under specific conditions, they can help parliamentarians to make better regulations (Rissi and Sager, 2013, 348).

studies have observed an increasing importance of evaluations in the parliaments (Speer et al., 2015; Jacob et al., 2015).

Although some authors have discussed the demand for evaluation (Toulemonde, 1999; Widmer, 2008a; Zollinger, 2009; Pattyn, 2014a), literature has so far mainly neglected the origins of evaluation. Moreover, scholars have completely left the parliament as a demander of evaluations out of the discussion, although parliamentarians are an important stakeholder of evaluations (Vedung, 2010, 268). The knowledge about the parliamentarians' motivation to demand evaluations may lead to evaluations where parliamentarians have stronger interests to be involved. Moreover, parliaments often ignore evaluation results (Weiss, 1999, 474). In order to increase the evaluation utility for parliamentarians, one has to understand what parliamentarians are seeking in evaluations, so that evaluators can improve the evaluation practice (Rog, 2015, 226). Hence, this article aims to contribute to research on evaluation by explaining the demand for evaluations specifically within the parliamentary arena.

In this article, I consider the question of why members of parliament demand evaluations with parliamentary requests. Building on the delegation literature (Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991; Strøm et al., 2006; Braun and Gilardi, 2006), I argue that the chain of delegation has two consequences for the parliament in order to fulfill its oversight function. On the one hand, a parliamentarian cannot be sure whether an agency will implement a policy in the parliament's sense (bureaucratic drift). On the other hand, the parliament often lacks in information in order to access the implementation by an agency (asymmetric information). Hence, I argue that parliamentarians demand evaluations in order to hold the government and its agencies accountable. In doing so, the article examines the hypotheses that a parliamentarian's perception of the extent of bureaucratic drift and asymmetric information influence a parliamentarians likelihood to demand an evaluation with parliamentary requests.

I analyze these arguments empirically with a parliamentary survey that was conducted amongst Swiss parliamentarians at the national and subnational level in order to obtain

information about their relationship to evaluations. Switzerland is of particular interest, as it is characterized by an advanced evaluation culture (Jacob, 2002; Jacob and Varone, 2004; Balthasar, 2007; Mader, 2009; Horber-Papazian and Jacot-Descombes, 2012; Horber-Papazian, 2015). According to Jacob et al. (2015, 145), the Swiss parliament is characterized by a high institutionalization of evaluation compared to other parliaments from OECD member states. Moreover, a general evaluation clause was introduced in the course of the new federal constitution in 1999, urging the Federal Assembly to ensure that federal measures are evaluated with regard to their effectiveness (Widmer, 2007, 76).

This article is structured as follows: First, section 2.2 illustrates how parliaments can demand evaluations in Switzerland. Section 2.3 describes the concept chain of delegation and how delegation affects the evaluation demand by the parliament. Then section 2.4 presents another group of variables, which might influence the demand for evaluations. Section 2.5 introduces data and methods, together with the operationalization. Then section 2.6 presents the results of a multi-level analysis, which shows that parliamentarians are more likely to demand evaluations with parliamentary requests if they think that the administration does not implement the policies in their sense. Finally, section 2.7 discusses the results, while section 2.8 concludes them and discusses their relevance for research on evaluation.

2.2 How Parliaments Demand Evaluations In Switzerland

Switzerland has not only developed a high degree of evaluation institutionalization, but also an active evaluation practice, even if the administration activity is not evaluated in a comprehensive and frequent way (Mader, 2009, 60). According to Jacob et al. (2015), Switzerland has the second highest evaluation culture after Finland. In doing so, the country has the most developed institutionalization of evaluation within the parliaments of all OECD member states.

Swiss parliamentarians have different possibilities in order to demand evaluations.³ In

³In this article, an evaluation is defined as a report or document that systematically and transparently

general, one can distinguish between two different ways: On the one hand, parliamentary committees can demand evaluations directly by commissioning specialized units with an evaluation. Although this procedure has a legal basis, committees hesitate to go by this way in Switzerland, with the exception of the Parliamentary Control of the Administration.⁴ On the other hand, individual members of parliament can indirectly demand evaluations. In doing so, parliamentarians do not commission evaluations directly, but urge the government to evaluate a policy. Parliamentarians can either include an evaluation clause⁵ into the law that obliges the agencies to conduct an evaluation and to report about its results (Bussmann, 2005) or to submit a parliamentary request to the government. According to Janett (2004, 145), Swiss parliamentarians prefer to demand evaluations with parliamentary requests.

In doing so, parliamentarians ask for all sorts of evaluations. Bundi et al. (2016) analyzed the parliamentary requests of parliamentarians at the federal level between 2010 and 2014. In total, the members of parliament submitted 188 parliamentary requests that demanded an evaluation, which all had different characteristics (Table 2.1). In doing so, the study distinguished between the evaluation purpose, perspective, and object⁶. According to the analysis, the parliamentarians most often demand evaluations in order to prospectively assess the effectiveness of a strategy. These findings confirm the results of Balthasar (2009, 497), who argues that parliamentarians are rather interested in prospective than retrospective evaluations.

In the next section, I will present the theoretical framework of with whom I plan on answering my research questions. The relationship between the parliament and the gov-

assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, benefit and/or costs of a policy.

⁴The Parliamentary Control of the Administration is the competence center of the Federal Assembly in matters of evaluations and conducts evaluations on behalf of the control committee. The unit only exists on the federal level, yet its function is partly fulfilled by the cantonal audit offices (Grüter, 2013, 650). Since 1993, they have conducted 62 evaluations: <http://www.parlament.ch/pvk> (Last Update: 2.9.2015).

⁵Bussmann (2005, 97-99) distinguishes between four different types of evaluation clauses: General, institutionally focused and area-field focused evaluation clauses, as well as evaluation clauses for para-state institutions.

⁶Policy evaluations can target different levels of policies. Widmer and DeRocchi (2012, 26) differ between five levels. Single measure, project (several measures, temporary), program (several measures, perpetual), strategy (several projects or programs), and policy field.

Table 2.1: Parliamentary Evaluations in Switzerland 2010-2014

Evaluation Characteristic	Attribute	Percentage
Purpose	Effectiveness	40.0
	Efficiency	13.0
	Benefit	17.4
	Cost	29.6
Perspective	On-going	16.3
	Retrospective	32.6
	Prospective	51.1
Object	Single Measure	25.5
	Project	21.8
	Program	19.2
	Strategy	33.5
	Policy Field	0.0

Note: N=188

ernment is characterized by a principal-agent relationship, since the parliament delegates the implementation of policies to the government (Lupia, 2003).⁷ Hereafter I will argue, that the delegation of policy implementation leads to a principal-agent situation, in which evaluations help parliamentarians to oversee the executive's actions.

2.3 Delegation & Evaluation

A central concept in the policy cycle process is the *chain of delegation*, in which those authorized to make political decisions mandate others to make such decisions on their behalf (Strøm, 2000; Strøm et al., 2006; Braun and Gilardi, 2006). In contemporary democracies, the chain of delegation starts with an election where citizens delegate their policy preferences to politicians (Müller et al., 2006, 19-21). The elected politicians - the parliamentarians - are responsible for transforming the policy preferences into the legislation. Since they only have limited resources and lack in specific policy knowledge, parliamentarians are not suitable for the implementation of the legislation. Hence, they delegate

⁷The principal-agent theory is rarely ever used in research on evaluation. Although Vedung (2008) used the framework prominently in order to distinguish between political actors in an evaluation context, there are only few other examples (Van Thiel and Leeuw, 2002; Clements et al., 2008).

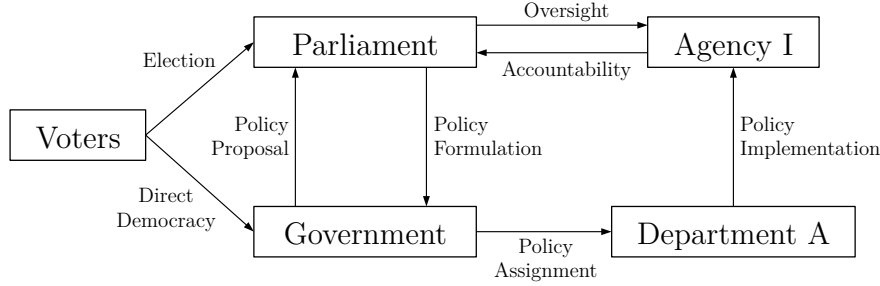
the implementation of the policies to the government, which usually distributes the tasks amongst the heads of the different government departments. The chain of delegation closes when the responsible heads of the government departments delegate the implementation of the specific policies to their public servants.

The concept of the chain of delegation was developed in the context of parliamentary democracies. Although [Strøm \(2000, 264\)](#) argues that Switzerland is not a parliamentary system, as the government is not dependent on the parliament's confidence⁸, the concept is also suitable for the Swiss context. Concerning the policy process, two additional steps in the chain of delegation appear. First, Swiss voters can not only delegate their policy preferences to their representatives through the process of elections, but also influence the policy process directly via direct democratic instruments ([Linder et al., 2010](#); [Vatter, 2016](#)). They can change the constitutions if a majority of voters and cantons accept the proposal in a ballot. In doing so, they delegate their policy preference to the government, which leads us to the second additional step of the Swiss chain of delegation. In general, the government prepares the policy proposals and delegates them to the parliament - about 75% of the bills are developed by the executive ([Vatter, 2016](#); [Lüthi, 2014](#)). Although the government prepares the policies, the parliament has a strong influence on the legislative proposals. Studies on the rate of the amendments assume that more than forty percent of the government proposals are modified within the parliament ([Jegher and Lanfranchini, 1996](#); [Schwarz et al., 2011](#)). After the parliament has formulated the policy, the remaining process is equivalent to other parliamentary democracies. As soon as the parliament has formulated a policy and submitted it to the government, the policy is assigned to a particular department, which delegates the implementation to an agency (Figure 4.3).

In literature, it is often argued that the chain of delegation can be modeled as a principal-agent relationship ([Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991](#); [Huber, 2000](#); [Müller et al., 2006](#)). The principal-agent theory describes the basic problems between a principal and

⁸The Federal Council - the Swiss government - is elected in the beginning of the legislature by the parliament for four years. However, the parliament is not able to dissolve the government. Unless the members of the Federal Council resign, they stay in their position for the complete legislature ([Klöti et al., 2014, 195](#)).

Figure 2.1: The Chain of Delegation in Switzerland



an agent (Williamson, 1975; Grossman and Hart, 1983; Pratt and Zeckhauser, 1991). According to Gilardi and Braun (2002, 147-148), the principal commissions the agent to render a service in his advantage in exchange for a certain reward. The theory is based on the assumptions of a methodological individualism: From this point of view, the agent is interested in reducing its effort as much as possible - as long as the principal barely can be satisfied. The principals' interests are insufficiently taken into account, as the agent does not inform the principal about opportunities for action. Hence, the principal cannot control whether the agent accomplishes a task that should be done whilst he is dependent on him. As a consequence of this dependency, the principal has to deal with an uncertainty, if the agent proceeds in a certain way in order to achieve his goals.

According to Kiewiet and McCubbins (1991), two problems appear in the delegation process between the parliament and the agencies, which implement the delegated tasks by the government. First, the parliament may not approve of an implementation of a certain policy by the agency. This situation is often called *bureaucratic drift* in literature, since the public servants drift away in their interpretation of the policy from the goals of the parliament (McCubbins et al., 1989, 435-440). Second, the parliament may lack in information in order to assess the policy implementation by the agency. Since the public servants know much more about the implementation of a policy than the parliament, there is an *asymmetric information* between them (Banks and Weingast, 1992; Saalfeld, 2000). As a consequence, there is uncertainty as to what extent the agency will implement a

policy in a way, which the parliament would approve. In order to reduce this uncertainty, the chain of delegation is mirrored by a corresponding chain of accountability that runs in the opposite direction (Müller et al., 2006, 19). According to Lupia (2003, 44-51), the problem of bureaucratic drift and asymmetric information gives the parliament an incentive to seek information about the government. He argues that such information can be generated in institutions and can distinguish between ex ante and ex post mechanisms. On the one hand, ex ante mechanisms help parliaments to learn about their agencies before and to anticipate asymmetric information problems. On the other hand, ex post mechanisms can be used in order to learn about the agencies' actions after the task and to deal with bureaucratic drift. Members of parliament have different possibilities in overseeing the administration units in order to control them and ensure accountability. According to McCubbins and Schwartz (1984), parliaments have a strong preference to fire alarm oversight where the parliament only intervenes in the case of indications from the media or the civil society. In doing so, they can organize hearings, inspections or commission evaluations in order to fulfill their oversight function.

In Switzerland, the parliament's oversight function is not only weakened by the direct democratic instruments, but also by the strong position of the government. Thus, the control capacity of the Swiss parliaments are rather limited compared to other countries (Schnapp and Harfst, 2005). In order to fulfill their oversight function, the control committees are the most important institutions for Swiss parliaments. The committees continuously control the administration with inspections by establishing subgroups, which focus on a special issue and write a report with recommendations for the attention of the government. Though, the government is not always responsive to the recommendations. Although it comments on the reports and often agrees with the findings, they put forward good reasons why no changes are needed in the present practices. Furthermore, the control committees also have problems in dealing with the high amount of information, which is why other instruments are taken into account (Mastronardi, 1990, 139-144).

As a consequence, the Swiss parliaments cannot control the complete policy imple-

mentation process. While hearings and inspections are difficult and costly to establish with non-public actors, and the resources of the control committees are limited, members of parliaments focus on parliamentary instruments (Wiberg, 1995; Proksch and Slapin, 2011). Evaluations in particular seem to be an instrument to oversee the activities of agencies and thus to provide accountability (Pollitt, 2006; Jacob et al., 2015, 40). During evaluations, agencies have to report about their activities and provide information for parliaments. Not only do the parliamentarians gather information about a certain policy, but also do they find out how the administration has implemented it. Moreover, evaluations allow parliamentarians to selectively oversee the policy implementation, which they tend to prefer than monitoring all activities. Hence, parliamentarians mainly demand evaluations in order to hold the government accountable (Widmer and DeRocchi, 2012; Speer et al., 2015). Thus, following hypotheses are investigated:

Hypothesis 1: *The bigger a parliamentarian’s perceived bureaucratic drift, the more likely a parliamentarian will demand an evaluation with parliamentary requests.*

Hypothesis 2: *The stronger a parliamentarian’s perceived asymmetric information between the parliament and the agencies, the more likely a parliamentarian will demand an evaluation with parliamentary requests.*

Since research on evaluation has not investigated the motivation for the parliamentary demand for evaluations, only little is known about this topic. Hence, it seems appropriate to focus on further explanatory factors. Building on literature about evaluations and parliaments, several aspects have to be considered in order to answer the research question. I call this variable group the *(un)usual suspects*, since some of them are known to be important for the evaluation activity in literature, while others are less well discussed. In the next chapter, I will explain their relevance for the parliamentary demand for evaluations.

2.4 The (Un)Usual Suspects

In research on evaluation, the attitude towards evaluations has widely been used as an explaining factor in several studies. According to [Johnson et al. \(2009, 384\)](#), several studies analyze the influence of attitude on the utilization of evaluations, but unfortunately find no clear evidence in the investigated articles.⁹ On the other hand, literature on evaluation capacity building (ECB) uses the attitude towards evaluations as a requirement in order to build evaluation capacity ([Labin et al., 2012](#)). In both research areas, a more positive attitude towards evaluations leads to a higher use of evaluations or ECB. There is a good reasons to believe that the individual attitude of parliamentarians towards evaluation not only varies amongst them, but also has an influence on the motivation to demand an evaluation ([Mark and Henry, 2004](#); [Christie, 2007](#)). Parliamentarians with a more positive attitude towards evaluations are more likely to demand evaluations, because they are more familiar with them and they see a profit.

Hypothesis 3: *The more positive a parliamentarian's attitude towards evaluations, the more likely a parliamentarian will demand an evaluation with parliamentary requests.*

The most important characteristic of parliamentarians is their ideology. The political parties have a different attitude towards the state or the society which effects their behavior in the parliament. According to [Balthasar and Rieder \(2009, 416\)](#), a parliament will rather check the administration's performance in cantons with a high percentage of liberals and conservatives, but the authors have not found a significant influence. However, [Frey \(2012, 279\)](#) argues that politicians from the political center allow themselves to be convinced by evaluations, as the political ideology moderates the openness towards evaluations. Since they are more open for evaluative information, it does not seem unlikely that political center parliamentarians demand evaluations with parliamentary requests more often than

⁹The latest investigation suggests rather no effect on the evaluation utilization. According to ([Bogensneider et al., 2013, 266](#)), parliamentarians from New York and Wisconsin do not often use evaluations, although they have quite a positive attitude towards them.

a parliamentarians of a left- or a right-wing party.¹⁰

Hypothesis 4: *A parliamentarian of a center-party will more likely demand an evaluation with parliamentary requests than a parliamentarian of a left- or right-wing party.*

Parliaments are usually subdivided into committees, which can be distinguished between two different types. According to Heierli (2000, 18), both the federal and cantonal level know committees which differ in their time-frame (standing and ad-hoc) and their function (legislative and oversight). The oversight committees both deal with questions about the government and administration's actions. While the finance committees oversee the budget, the control committees supervise the government, the administration and the courts. In doing so, both come across evaluations more frequently than other parliamentarians. Since the oversight committee members are more exposed to evaluations, it is more likely that they will more often demand evaluations than other members of parliament.

Hypothesis 5: *A parliamentarian of an oversight committee will more likely demand an evaluation with parliamentary requests than a parliamentarian which is not a member of an oversight committee.*

As mentioned in the introduction, Switzerland has a general evaluation clause, which shall encourage the parliament to let the public policies be evaluated on their effectiveness. While the federal level has known this type of evaluation clause since 1999, some cantons included a general clause in their constitution afterwards, or had it even before (Horber-Papazian, 2007, 137). A general evaluation clause is an article in the constitution that suggests that public measures should be evaluated. Although a general evaluation clause is mostly of symbolic use and does not have a binding effect, there is a probability that this factor influences the parliamentarians motivation to demand an evaluation with parliamentary requests. A general evaluation clause provides a legal foundation in

¹⁰In addition, Speer et al. (2015, 45) argue that DIE LINKE in Germany has the highest interest in EBPM, but it remains unclear whether this result is due to ideological preferences or to their opposition role.

order to conduct an evaluation and foster the parliamentarians' motivation to demand an evaluation.

Hypothesis 6: *A parliamentarian in a parliament, whose constitution has a general evaluation clause, will more likely demand an evaluation with parliamentary requests than a parliamentarian in a parliament, whose constitution has no general evaluation clause.*

The institutional position of a parliament towards the executive can also influence the parliamentary demand for evaluations. A study from [Kaiss \(2010\)](#) illustrates the cantonal variation of the parliament's power in an index.¹¹ While Geneva and Berne have strongly developed legislative competences, Glarus and both Appenzell Outer Rhodes and Inner Rhodes have rather weaker positions. I argue that the stronger the parliamentary rights are, the more the parliament will demand evaluations, because it feels at eye level with the government.

Hypothesis 7: *The stronger the institutional position of the parliament towards the executive, the more likely a parliamentarian will demand an evaluation with parliamentary requests.*

In the next section I will discuss the data and the methods that I use to examine the hypotheses. In doing so, I discuss the parliamentary survey and the operationalization of the variables that are included in the model.

2.5 Data & Methods

The basis of this study is an online survey amongst the cantonal and federal members of parliament, which was conducted during May and June, 2014. The parliamentarians

¹¹The index measures the parliament's power towards the government and is based on the three main functions of the parliament: election, legislation and oversight. In total, 17 indicators are used for the measurement (e.g. possibility to elect the head of the government, right to initiative legislation, power of the committees etc.). For more information see [Kaiss \(2010\)](#).

were asked about their relationship to evaluations.¹² In total, 1570 parliamentarians have participated in the survey, which comes up to a response rate of 55.3%.¹³ Compared to similar surveys amongst Swiss parliaments, this percentage is relatively high. Brun and Siegel (2006) achieved a response rate of 21.3% in a survey about performance reports in the context of new public management. Focusing only on the federal level, Bütikofer (2014) was even able to collect 65% in the lower and 70% in the upper house.

In order to measure the dependent variable - the demand of an evaluation with parliamentary requests - the parliamentarians were asked if they ever submitted a request in the last four years in order to investigate a public policy regarding its effectiveness or efficiency. The independent variables were also mostly collected through the online-survey. The delegation variables were obtained by asking the parliamentarians if they agreed that the administration implements the legislation in their meaning, or that they had enough information in order to judge the administration's implementation. In contrast, the parliamentarian's attitude towards evaluations is measured on a multi-dimensional scale. According to Rosenberg and Hovland (1965), attitude is based on a three-dimensional structure, which contains cognitive, affective and behavioral components. First, the cognitive dimension illustrates the (potential) knowledge about evaluations. Second, the affective component indicates the parliamentarian's benefit of an evaluation. Finally, the last dimension indicates the behavioral intention of a parliamentarian whether the person will use an evaluation. Hence, the parliamentarians were asked whether they read evaluation summaries, if they think that evaluations are useful for them, and if they usually use evaluations in order to make decisions. The three items are gathered together in a single index.¹⁴ In addition, I create a dummy variable for parliamentarians of center parties¹⁵

¹²As parliamentarians have a broad understanding of an evaluation, the survey gave a definition in the introduction: "In this survey, evaluations are interpreted as studies, reports or other documents, which assess a state's measure in a systematic and transparent way with respect to their effectiveness, efficiency or fitness for purpose."

¹³N=2841. Note that some seats were vacant due to parliamentarians' withdrawals.

¹⁴Cronbach's α of the three items is 0.69, they correlate significantly on the 99% level.

¹⁵Following parties are considered as a center party: FDP, The Liberals, Christian Democratic People's Party, Green Liberal Party, Conservative Democratic Party, Evangelical People's Party, and Christian Social Party.

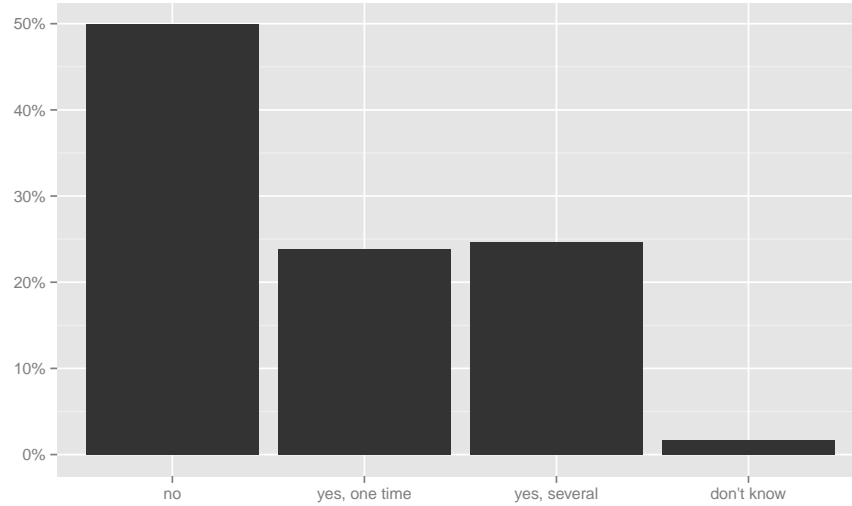
and a dummy variable for the membership in an oversight committee. Similarly, a dummy variable indicates if there is a general evaluation clause in the cantonal or federal constitution, while the institutional position is measured by an index according to [Kaiss \(2010\)](#). Moreover, I also include several control variables: Age, sex, urbanity, education, professionalization, parliament experience, board membership¹⁶, the size of the administration and the expenses on the cantonal and federal level. The operationalization is summarized in Table 4.5 in the appendix.

Two aspects have to be considered when choosing a suitable method to examine the hypotheses. First, the outcome of the dependent variable is binary, which is why I will use a logistic regression model. Second, the data is grouped into a higher level (parliaments). Thus, the parliamentarian's behavior might be dependent on the parliament in which the parliamentarians is part of. Hence, a multi-level approach is pursued, as it involves data which is arrayed hierarchically and has several advantages ([Steenbergen and Jones, 2002](#)). In doing so, I can integrate variables on the parliament level in my model, which I expect to have a theoretical impact on the parliamentarian's probability to demand a parliamentary request. However, in this way I also can reduce the standard errors, which would be underestimated if the parliament variables had not been integrated in the model. In doing so, I cluster the data with regard to the parliaments.

Through the statistical analysis, I will test the two theories against each other in order to find out if the delegation variables can explain the parliamentary demand for evaluations or if the (un)usual suspects play the leading part in this story. Hence, I will test different models which distinguish between their included variables. However, in literature on evaluation, hardly anything is known about the parliamentary demand for evaluations. As a consequence, I will first illustrate the distribution of the dependent variable.

¹⁶The parliament board is responsible for the organization and for the procedures of the parliament and thus has a leading function.

Figure 2.2: Percent of Parliamentarians Demanding an Evaluation



"Did you propose a parliamentary request in order to examine a state measure regarding its implementation and effects?"

2.6 Results

In the survey, the parliamentarians were asked if they proposed a parliamentary request in order to examine a state measure in the last four years (Figure 2.2). Almost 50% of the parliamentarians which participated in the survey replied with no. On the other hand, nearly the same percentage (49%) demanded an evaluation with a parliamentary request during the last four years. Within this group, there is about the same share of parliamentarians that proposed only once (24%), respectively several times (25%). At a first glance, this percentage seems quite high. However, one has to consider that parliamentary requests can not only be proposed by a single parliamentarian, but also by several members of parliament, especially when a committee is the initiator of the request. Moreover, by far not all parliamentary requests successfully pass the parliamentary arena. Note: N=1499

If the parliamentarians responded with no, they had to declare their most important reason for not demanding an evaluation with a parliamentary request (Figure 2.3). According to more than 42%, no suitable opportunity ever arose. 26 percent of the asked

parliamentarians indicated that the administration already provides enough evaluation reports. Moreover, 7% of the members of parliament argued that they have only been in the parliament for a short time and have not much experience. Only few parliamentarians chose the response option that there is no need for such studies and that evaluations should be resigned for financial reasons (each 7%). Hence, only 13% mention rather negative reasons why they do not demand evaluations, albeit one can assume that parliamentarians with no suitable opportunity may simply not be interested in evaluations. This corresponds to the responses to the question about the parliamentarian's utilization of evaluation.¹⁷

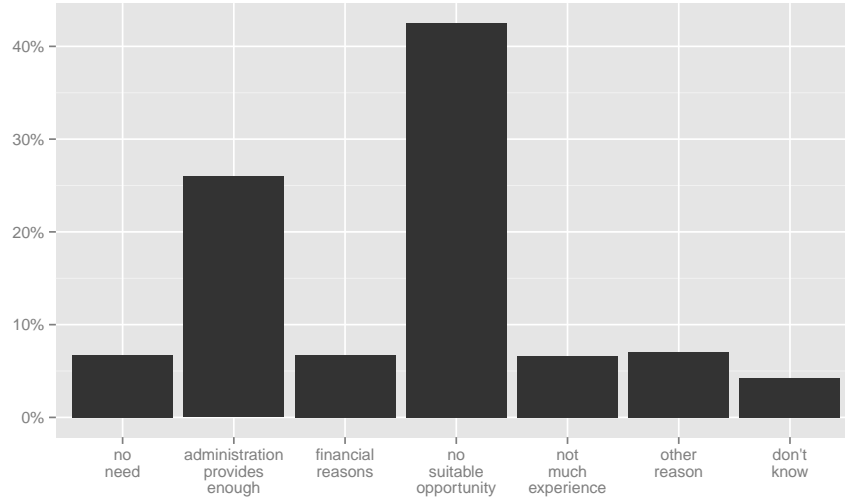
As a next step, I will check the determinants for the probability to demand an evaluation with a parliamentary request. In doing so, I executed six different models (Table 2.2). First, an "empty model" is tested in order to ascertain if there is any variance on the parliament level. In doing so, Model 0 has no indicators on the individual- and parliament-levels, suggesting some autocorrelation in the variance of parliamentary requests on the parliament level. The likelihood ratio test shows that the error terms correlate on the parliament level, since the variance between them do not equal to zero.¹⁸ Hence, it seems reasonable to use a multi-level approach, which should explain the variation at the parliament level.

Model 1 tests the explanatory strength of the delegation variables, controlling the parliamentarians' predispositions and political dispositions. As we can see, the variable bureaucratic drift has a significant effect, which means that if a parliamentarian thinks the administration implements the legislation in the meaning of the parliament, the parliament's probability to propose a parliamentary request decreases. On the other hand, it seems that it has no effect if a member of parliament thinks he has enough information to judge the implementation. However, also the professionalization, the experience in a parliament and the membership in the parliament board have a highly significant influence in whether an evaluation will be demanded. When the variables on the parliament level

¹⁷The parliamentarians were asked if they use evaluations for legislation (11% never), oversight (13%), and budget-making-decisions (12%).

¹⁸ ψ is significant at the 10% level.

Figure 2.3: Parliamentarians' Reason for No Parliamentary Requests



"Why did you not propose a parliamentary request in order to examine a state measure regarding its implementation and effects?" (N=724)

are also included, the outcome does not change remarkably (Model 2). Not only does the effect of the political dispositions stay highly significant, but also the effect of the variable bureaucratic drift. On the contrary, the size of the administration and the public expenses do not seem to have an effect.

After testing the effect of the delegation variables, Model 3 checks if the variables of the group (un)usual suspects I have an influence on the dependent variable. The parliamentarians' attitude towards an evaluation and the membership in an oversight committee are indeed significantly positive, while the party ideology does not seem to be of relevance.¹⁹ In contrast, the professionalization of a parliamentarian is no longer significant. This finding indicates that the effect of professionalization in Model 2 and 3 is probably not robust. A possible explanation could be an interfering effect of the (un)usual suspects I variables. In Model 4, the variables on the higher level are added, as well as the parliamentary disposition and the (un)usual suspects II. Compared to Model 3, the coefficients stays stable. While the evaluation base in the cantonal and federal constitut-

¹⁹Concerning the party ideology, I also tested the effects for every single party as well as for the two party groups "left parties" and "right parties". There were no significant effects for these variables.

Table 2.2: Individual and Parliament Random Effects Models

	Dependent variable: Parliamentary Request					
	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Individual Level						
Predispositions						
Age		0.679	0.687	0.600	0.661	0.840
Sex		0.134	0.129	0.200	0.208*	0.176
Urbanity		0.070	0.055	0.023	0.040	0.054
Education		0.127	0.136	0.058	0.068	0.094
Political Dispositions						
Professionalization		0.705**	1.015**	0.159	-0.031	0.002
Parliament Experience		0.026***	0.026***	0.029***	0.029***	0.028***
Board Member		0.395**	0.379**	0.366**	0.384**	0.397***
Delegation						
Bureaucratic Drift		-0.338*	-0.350*			-0.523**
Asymmetric Information		-0.006	-0.006			0.039
(Un)usual Suspects I						
Attitude				0.704***	0.697***	0.728***
Center Party				-0.053	-0.077	-0.151
Oversight Committee				0.205*	0.206*	0.276**
Parliament Level						
Parliamentary Disposition						
Size of Administration			-0.000		-0.000	-0.000*
Public Expenses			-0.000		-0.000	-0.000
(Un)usual Suspects II						
Evaluation Base					0.205*	0.229*
Institutional Position					1.037	1.026
Residual Variance						
Between ψ	0.031	0.131	0.097	0.085	0.000	0.000
Parliamentarians						
Log Likelihood	1,474	1,372	1,372	1,384	1,384	1,337
	-1,020.519	-928.145	-926.804	-908.097	-903.459	-866.227

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

ion only has a weakly significant effect on the parliamentarians likelihood to demand an evaluation, the institutional position has no influence at all.

In Model 5, I combine the delegation variables and the (un)usual suspects. The full model confirms the prior results and provides evidence for hypotheses 1,3, and 5, and tends to reject hypotheses 2,4,6, and 7. First, the perceived bureaucratic drift seems to influence a parliamentarian's likelihood to demand an evaluation, while the asymmetric information has no influence. Second, the parliamentarians' predispositions do not seem to be important, but their political dispositions indeed play a crucial role. Third, the un(us)al aspects have no influence on the parliamentarian's motivation to demand an evaluation, apart from the attitude towards evaluations and the membership in an oversight committee. The effects of the variables can also be observed in the predicted probability to demand an evaluation (Figure 2.4).

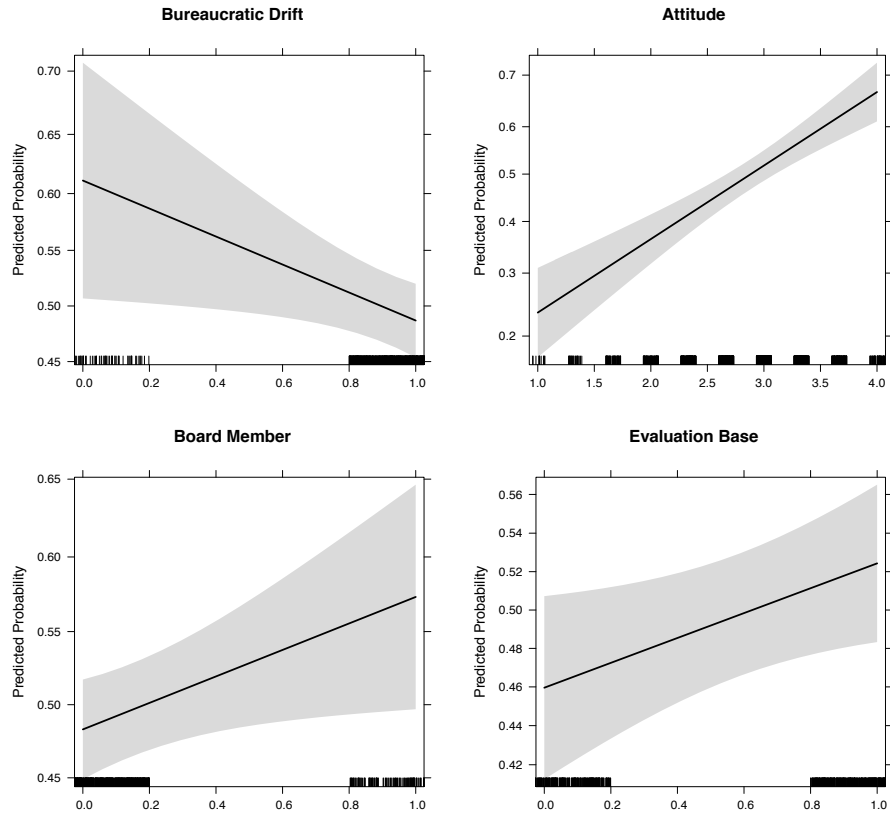
The figure illustrates the individual propensity to demand an evaluation for the effect of the variables bureaucratic drift, attitude, board member and evaluation base.²⁰ As the graphs show, the strongest effect can be observed between a parliamentarian with a negative attitude and a parliamentarian with a high one. The other variables have a less strong effect, but also the 95% confidence interval is broader.

2.7 Discussion

In the end, who demands evaluations in the parliament? The statistical analysis provides some evidence that those parliamentarians demand evaluations who want to hold the government accountable. Since they have the impression that the agencies might not implement the policies in their sense, parliamentarians seem to take evaluations as an instrument in order to fulfill their oversight function. Hence, it is not surprising that parliamentarians in an oversight committee tend to demand more evaluations than their colleagues who are not. In addition, a parliamentarian needs to have a positive attitude towards the instrument evaluation in order to request it. The analysis also shows that

²⁰All other individual and contextual determinants are at the median.

Figure 2.4: Individual Probability to Demand an Evaluation with Parliamentary Requests



more experienced members and members in a leading position (parliament board members) demand more evaluations, which suggests that they are more sensible to accountability than their colleagues. As a consequence, the evidence from the analysis suggests that the parliamentarians see themselves as principals who want to control the agent, in form of the bureaucratic agencies. Moreover, these findings confirm other studies that suggest that parliamentary requests are an important instrument in order to perform oversight (Proksch and Slapin, 2011; Martin and Vanberg, 2008). As Wiberg (1995) argues that parliaments rather control the government by threatening it with a vote of confidence than by parliamentary requests, the latter receives an even more important role since the Swiss parliament cannot dissolve the government. However, since the exertion of such

instruments are time-consuming, members of parliament demand evaluations sparingly.

These conclusions could be very relevant for literature on evaluation use and evaluation practice. In the last fifteen years, several scholars have argued that research on evaluation should shift from *evaluation use* to *evaluation influence* in order to capture advanced impacts and consequences of evaluations (Kirkhart, 2000; Mark and Henry, 2004). However, Herbert (2014, 412) argues that present studies on evaluation influence have several limitations. On the one hand, the studies rely mostly on the information from the evaluator, whose perspective could be biased. On the other hand, several studies focus on self-reports by organizational stakeholders that have an interest to be perceived as an evidence-based organization. Hence, the findings of this study provides important new insights from the parliamentary arena, an important stakeholder of policy evaluations (Vedung, 2010). The findings mostly coincide with those of Speer et al. (2015), who have investigated the evaluation demand in the Flemish and in the German parliament. Compared to these parliaments, the Swiss case can be classified between them. While Swiss members of parliaments rather ask for evaluations for reasons of accountability than to use the evaluation information as in Germany, parliamentarians from opposition and government parties do not differ from each other in their evaluation demand as in Flanders. This is not surprising since Switzerland is considered as a consensus democracy, which involves a substantial share of parties in the government (Lijphart, 2012; Sciarini et al., 2015). The results imply an important message: If an evaluation wants to be relevant and influential for a parliament, it should rather focus on accountability than on learning. Evaluators can enhance the utility of evaluations when they pay attention to the parliamentarians's needs. This conclusion corresponds with the findings of Borrás and Højlund (2015, 114) that the main learners of evaluations are program units and not external stakeholders (e.g. parliaments).

2.8 Conclusion

In the last twenty years, evaluations have established themselves as an important instrument to assess public policies. In research on evaluation, the motivation for the production of evaluations has rarely been investigated empirically so far. Moreover, the role of the parliament has completely been neglected in this discussion, although an evaluation is an important tool for the members of parliament. In this article, I have developed the argument that parliamentarians demand evaluations in order to hold the government accountable. The statistical analysis of the parliamentary requests demanding an evaluation indicates that Swiss parliamentarians ask more likely for evaluations if they think that the administration does not implement the policies in their sense.

This study has also some limitations. When conducting a survey, different sources of measurement errors can additionally occur that may question the analytical power of the sample, even if the number of participants is sufficient. Generally, there are two main problems: On the one hand, the representativeness of the sample can be biased by the members of parliament who did not participate, since the non-responses might differ significantly from the responses of the participants (self-selection). On the other hand, the responses are reported directly by the parliaments themselves. Since the members of parliament have to remember their past actions on evaluations, they are likely to under- or overestimate their activities (misreporting). In addition, the findings are also limited due to the fact that only one country was investigated, although Switzerland is very appropriate for these research questions, since it is characterized by a high evaluation institutionalization. However, more studies from other countries would help to explain the demand for evaluations. Moreover, it would also help to understand whether the strong evaluation culture affects the evaluation demand by the parliament. The analysis suggests that the individual factors are more important than the context, even if the evaluation culture might influence all parliamentarians. This finding alludes that the analysis provides information on the parliamentary evaluation demand that goes beyond the case of Switzerland.

This article offers strong empirical evidence for the explanation of the motivation behind the parliamentary demand for evaluations due to a new database which was gathered by conducting a survey. Until now, only selective aspects have been researched in the relationship between parliaments and evaluations. Although plausible arguments were discussed in this article, it is clear that more research has to be done in order to understand the role of evaluations in parliaments. In my opinion, this article is a useful starting point for such research.

Appendix

Table 2.3: Operationalization of the Variables

Variable	Operationalization	Source	ER HYP
Individual Level			
Parliamentary Request	In the last four years, did you propose a parliamentary request in order to examine a state measure with regard to implementation and impact? Dummy: 0 for <i>no</i> , 1 for <i>yes</i>	Parliament Survey	
Individual Level			
<i>Predispositions</i>			
Age	Age of a MPs in years Rescaled on a continuous scale 0-1	Parliament Survey	
Sex	Dummy: 0 for <i>male</i> , 1 for <i>female</i>	Parliament Survey	
Urbanity	Place of residence Dummy: 0 for <i>rural</i> , 1 for <i>urban</i>	Parliament Survey	
Education	What is your highest degree of education? Dummy: 0 for <i>under pedagogical university</i> , 1 for <i>pedagogical university and upper</i>	Parliament Survey	
<i>Political Disposition</i>			
Professionalization	Over the last year, what is the amount of time spent for your parliament mandate, in percentage of a full-time job? Continuous scale 0-100	Parliament Survey	
Parliament Experience	How many years of experience do you have in a communal, cantonal and/or national parliament? Continuous scale	Parliament Survey	

Variable	Operationalization	Source	ER	HYP
Individual Level				
<i>Predispositions</i>				
Membership Board	Membership in the parliament office Dummy: 0 for <i>no</i> , 1 for <i>yes</i>	Parliament Survey		
<i>Delegation</i>				
Bureaucratic Drift	Generally, the administration implements the legislation within the meaning of the parliament Dummy: 0 for <i>disagree</i> , 1 for <i>agree</i>	Parliament Survey	-	C
Asymmetric Information	The parliament has enough information to judge the administration's implementation of the legislation Dummy: 0 for <i>disagree</i> , 1 for <i>agree</i>	Parliament Survey	+	F
<i>(Un)usual suspects I</i>				
Evaluation Attitude	Index of three dimensions: - During the last four years, how many times did you read an evaluation summary? - Evaluations are a useful instrument for me as a member of parliament. - Whenever possible, my political decisions are supported by evaluation or other studies. Categorical scale: 1 = <i>never/strongly disagree</i> - 4 = <i>frequently/strongly</i>	Parliament Survey	+	C
Center Party	Membership in a center party Dummy: 0 for <i>no</i> , 1 for <i>yes</i>	Parliament Survey	+	F
Oversight Committee	Membership in an oversight committee Dummy: 0 for <i>no</i> , 1 for <i>yes</i>	Parliament Survey	+	C
Parliament Level				
<i>Political Disposition</i>				
Size of Administration	Size of administration Number of employees of the public administration	BADAC (2008) EPA (2014)		

Variable	Operationalization	Source	ER	HYP
Parliament Level				
<i>Political Disposition</i>				
Public Expenses	Public expenses per inhabitant in Swiss francs (CHF)	BADAC (2010)		
<i>(Un)usual suspects II</i>				
Evaluation Clause	General evaluation clause in the cantonal/federal constitution Dummy: 0 for <i>no</i> , 1 for <i>yes</i>	Horber (2007), supp.	+	C
Institutional Position	Institutional position of the parliament towards the government Continuous scale	Kaiss (2010), supp.	+	F
ER = Expected relationship; HYP = Hypothesis corroborated (C) or proven false (F); supp = Data supplemented				

Table 2.4: Descriptive Statistic of all Variables

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Parliamentary Request	1474	0.493	0.500	0	1
Age	1570	0.517	0.102	0.21	0.83
Sex	1570	0.301	0.459	0	1
Urbanity	1570	0.643	0.479	0	1
Education	1481	0.511	0.500	0	1
Professionalization	1483	0.239	0.161	0	1
Parliament Experience	1486	10.576	8.330	0	56
Board Member	1570	0.147	0.348	0	1
Bureaucratic Drift	1486	0.915	0.278	0	1
Asymmetric Information	1448	0.711	0.454	0	1
Attitude	1508	2.719	0.628	1	4
Center Party	1570	0.452	0.498	0	1
Oversight Committee	1492	0.396	0.489	0	1
Size of Administration	1570	17810.630	17108.07	344	57747
Public Expenses	1570	13291.960	3527.737	7530	23662
Evaluation Base	1570	0.571	0.495	0	1
Institutional Position	1570	0.608	0.108	0.28	0.76

Article II

Parliamentarians' Strategies for Policy Evaluations

Accepted for publication in *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 2017.

3.1 Introduction

Policy evaluations fulfill an important function within contemporary democracies. They assess a public policy in regard to its effectiveness, efficiency or fitness for purpose. This information is not only potentially interesting for the public administration, but also for other institutions. Since members of parliament (MPs) have to make many decisions about unfamiliar issues, evaluation studies may provide them with information on specific policies (Weiss, 1999, 478). Moreover, recent studies show that MPs use evaluations for accountability (Speer et al., 2015; Bundi, 2016) as well as agenda-setting (Zwaan et al., 2016) by demanding evaluations with parliamentary requests.

In general, parliamentary requests allow MPs to initiate new policies or to receive information about them, which is why they belong to the most powerful tools of parliaments (Pelizzo and Stapenhurst, 2012). On the one hand, some studies argue that parliamentary requests allow parliaments to align the government's actions with their own voters' preferences, as they enable MPs to set the agenda (Raunio, 1996; Martin, 2011a; Bailer, 2011). On the other hand, authors state that parliamentary requests are a useful tool to control the government, since they provide information on how the government implements policies (Russo and Wiberg, 2010; Proksch and Slapin, 2011). Policy evaluations meet both needs for MPs, since they provide information for legislation and oversight. However, previous literature fails to explain which purposes MPs have when they submit a parliamentary request to demand an evaluation. Thus, this article aims to look behind the scenes of parliamentary procedures in order to understand the strategies of policy evaluations in parliaments.

This article considers the question of which strategies MPs pursue when they use parliamentary requests to demand an evaluation. The paper argues that MPs are mainly driven by the aspiration of reelection and seeking desirable policies. In order to achieve these goals, they can make use of legislative roles: Either they appeal to their constituency or they promote their party so that the party leadership rewards them. Previous studies

suggest that MPs are mainly influenced by two organizational allocations: Committee and party group membership (Bowler and Farrell, 1995; McElroy and Benoit, 2007). Depending on their allocation, MPs pursue different strategies with policy evaluations.

Empirically, the analysis is based on a comparative case study approach (Yin, 2014). In doing so, the study investigates twelve parliamentary requests, which were submitted between 2010 and 2014 at the federal level in Switzerland. Evaluations are particularly well established in the Swiss political system and are highly institutionalized in the parliament compared to other democracies (Jacob et al., 2015). Furthermore, Switzerland is a least likely case for the observation of legislative roles. On the one hand, the Swiss parliament has weak oversight capacities and only knows a limited opposition system due to the consensual character of the Swiss democracy (Vatter, 2016). On the other hand, parliamentary groups still tend to have a powerless position within the parliament, which can be observed by their low voting unity (Bailer and Bütikofer, 2015; Coman, 2015).

The study shows that MPs indeed pursue different strategies with evaluations. The committee membership has a considerable effect on the strategy of an evaluation. While MPs from oversight committees seek information with evaluations, MPs from legislative committees demand evaluations in order to oppose a policy. On the contrary, the party group membership does not influence the evaluation strategy. These findings provide important implications for research on evaluations. Not only does the study contribute to research on the demand of evaluation, which has rarely been investigated so far, but it also illustrates that MPs pursue different strategies with evaluations. Evaluations might be demanded for social betterment, but they are also requested for the pursuit of personal goals (e.g. reelection, policy outcomes). This conclusion indicates that we have to change our understanding of the role of evaluation in the decision-making process. MPs use evaluations as an instrument rather than the findings of evaluations.

The article is structured as follows: Section 3.2 introduces the theoretical framework and the hypotheses. Section 3.3 discusses the research design and case selection. Section 3.4 presents the findings of the case studies, which are discussed in section 3.5. Section

3.6 concludes the results and discusses the implications of the findings for research on evaluation.

3.2 Theory

Strategic behavior is an important component for MPs, as several studies have illustrated the importance of strategic voting in parliaments (Farquharson, 1969; Clinton and Meirowitz, 2004; Rasch, 2014; Bütikofer and Hug, 2015; Hug et al., 2015). Moreover, MPs also express their strategic nature by the use of parliamentary requests (Bowler, 2010; Martin, 2011b; Kellermann, 2013; Martin and Rozenberg, 2014; Kellermann, 2016). In doing so, MPs mainly have two motives for their activities. On the one hand, they may submit parliamentary requests to attract attention from the public, since they are influenced by their electoral vulnerability. This argumentation is based on the assumption that MPs have incentives to maximize their votes in order to succeed in elections (Norris, 2004, 98-101). On the other hand, they might propose parliamentary requests in order to influence the political agenda. As a consequence, they do not primarily aim to get reelected, but rather focus on their desirable policy outcomes (Müller and Strøm, 1999).

Both interpretations of the motives are based on a rational choice perspective. However, rational choice institutionalism differs across the context. Shepsle (2006, 28-30) highlights the importance of rational choice for structured institutions. A parliament is usually a structured institution, in which MPs are elected by their voters and thus are an agent of their constituency. By rule, MPs are authorized to act on behalf of their voters during their election. Since the voters delegate their policy preferences to the MPs, the latter are also accountable towards them (Müller et al., 2006).¹ Therefore, MPs spend a considerable amount of time and effort to appeal to their voters, by responding to their mail or attending public events (Kellermann, 2016; Giger and Lanz, 2016). Also, they focus on the topics in the parliamentary arena from which they believe that voters will

¹However, André et al. (2014, 234) argues that voters need to have the possibility to monitor the MPs' actions, and also to sanction or reward them for their performance.

reward them in the next election. In doing so, MPs can use parliamentary requests in order to propose a political project, which is favorable to their voters ([André et al., 2014](#)). Moreover, it can lead to additional publicity for the author, since media frequently reports about parliamentary requests ([Van Santen et al., 2015](#)).

Although electoral vulnerability is doubtless an important trigger, MPs might also be motivated by policy outcomes. This idea is based on the idea that MPs are not only accountable to their constituency, but also to their own party. [Katz \(2014\)](#) recently showed that a MP has multiple principals. In order to get reelected, MPs do not only have to care about their voters, but also about their party, since the party leadership is often responsible for nominating the candidates. They also have the power to obstruct a MP from the election, if the MP does not seem favorable for them. Albeit parties do also care about electoral success, they care a little less about individual MP success, but more about policy and political competition ([Benoit and Laver, 2006](#)). In order to enforce their policies' preferences, parties depend on their internal cohesion. According to [Kam \(2014, 399\)](#), party cohesion is the degree to which members of the same party work together in order to pursue the party's goal. Most prominently, MPs from the same party should coordinate their votes to pass the policy ([Krehbiel, 2000](#); [Kam, 2009](#)). As a consequence, parliamentary questions should not request an issue, which contradicts the party's opinion or is detrimental to it. More important, parliamentary questions could lead government members of the same party to inconveniences, if the request reveals a governmental failure ([Jensen et al., 2013](#)).

Subsequently, MPs do not only have to consider their constituency, but also their party. Since the voters and the party are the collective principal that chooses an MP to act as its agent, they are vulnerable to the usual kinds of agency problems: Adverse selection and moral hazard ([Strøm, 2000, 270](#)). In doing so, voters, and partly also the party both face problems of hidden information and action, since they cannot be fully informed about the politicians who plan to run for office. Hence, both relationships entail a form of delegation, thus make the MPs accountable towards their voters. Since both have a strong influence

on how MPs behave in the parliament, MPs sometimes face a dilemma between what is in the interest of their own party and what is important for their voters (Carey and Shugart, 1995). The crucial point for MPs is to satisfy both interests at the same time.

Legislative roles² help MPs to satisfy both voters and party leaders. Various studies emphasize the different roles amongst MPs (Wahlke, 1962; Andeweg, 1997, 2014; Scully and Farrell, 2003). Strøm (2012) argues that MPs pursue different goals depending on their situation in the parliament. In doing so, their situation is often influenced by their organizational allocation. In most parliaments, MPs are divided into legislative and oversight committees in addition to their membership in their party groups. According to Saalfeld (2000), these memberships have a high influence on how MPs interpret their role in the parliament. While members of oversight committees tend to focus on the control of the administration, members of the legislative committees seek to promote themselves by policy advocacy. Moreover, parties delegate their members into committees urging them to represent their party's preference in the legislative committees.

In Switzerland, MPs might use parliamentary requests in order to assume such legislative roles. Parliamentary requests are generally considered as the instruments, with which the Federal Assembly³ can influence the political agenda directly, since the agenda of committees is mainly determined by the Federal Council and its departments (Vatter, 2016, 285). They enable MPs to propose a new policy or to obtain information on specific matters. In general, one can distinguish between four different requests: Motion, postulate, interpellation, and question.⁴ The requests vary in their procedure and goal. A motion instructs the Federal Council to initiate a new policy proposal or to undertake a

²In literature, the term *legislative roles* is often used to describe the behavioral patterns or routines that MPs adopt. However, apart from legislative aspects, these patterns can also include oversight goals (Strøm, 1997).

³The Swiss Federal Assembly is a bicameral parliament. In contrast to other countries, the lower (National Council) and upper house (Council of States) are perfectly symmetric, since they have exactly the same prerogatives (Bütikofer and Hug, 2010, 178)

⁴In addition, the National Council has a question time every second or third week of session. During the question time, the Federal Council orally answers written questions, which their members have received in the beginning of a session. Furthermore, MPs can submit parliamentary initiatives to propose a new bill. However, these initiatives are directly treated by a legislative committee instead of the Federal Council (Vatter and Wirz, 2015).

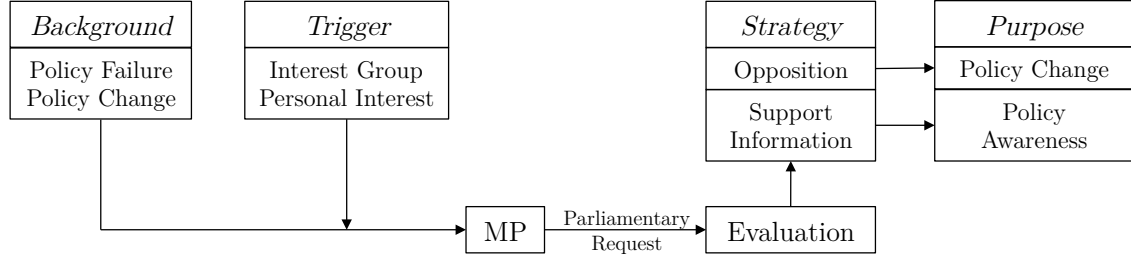
certain action. A postulate requests the Federal Council to examine and report on whether to submit a new policy proposal or to undertake a certain action. In addition, MPs can also request a report on a different matter with a postulate. Finally, an interpellation or a question requests the Federal Council to provide information on matters that are related to the Swiss Confederation.⁵ A parliamentary request can be submitted by individual MPs, a parliamentary group or a committee. Although they are often signed by several MPs, usually only one MP is the author of the parliamentary request.

Policy evaluations might be a particularly worthwhile request for a MP, as they provide information for legislations (Weiss, 1989; Christie, 2003) and for overseeing the government (Lees, 1977; Bundi, 2016). Therefore, MPs might use evaluations in order to assume specific legislative roles. In doing so, they have different possibilities to demand an evaluation. With interpellations and questions, MPs ask the government whether they would support an evaluation for a certain policy. In contrast, a motion includes an evaluation of a policy within the new bill, which finally results in an evaluation clause if the legislation is passed in the parliament (Bussmann, 2005). The most direct way to demand an evaluation is the postulate. In doing so, the MP requests a report about a policy regarding its effectiveness or efficiency. However, the process of all parliamentary evaluation requests that demand an evaluation can be structured into four different stages: *Background*, *Trigger*, *Strategy*, and *Purpose*. The background and trigger have an influence on the MP's evaluation strategy, which determines the purpose of the evaluation. Figure 3.1 identifies the process and illustrates how the demand for a policy evaluation develops.

Background: MPs react to certain circumstances with parliamentary requests. Either a policy has turned out to be a failure or a policy has changed and it is uncertain whether the change causes new effects. In order to spot such policy failures, a MP may demand an evaluation in order to obtain information about the deficient policy (Linder and Peters, 1990, 307). In contrast, a policy change harbors perils due to its unknown effects. Hence, policy changes also often increase the need for information in order to calculate the impact

⁵Art. 118-125 ParlG, SR 171.10.

Figure 3.1: Process of Parliamentary Evaluation Requests



of the change.

Trigger: Two factors usually trigger MPs to submit parliamentary requests to a specific issue. On the one hand, MPs have a special interest in a certain policy field due to their personal background or their specialization within parliament (Searing, 1991; Bowler and Farrell, 1995). Since MPs only have limited resources, they often specialize in certain policy areas in which they are members of a committee. On the other hand, several studies have shown that interest groups are often the main driver behind parliamentary questions (Raunio, 1996; Bailer, 2011). According to Richardson (2000, 1009), interest groups provide information, which influences the decision-making process. Therefore, interest groups are keen on evaluations due to their information content.

Strategy: Previous studies show that evaluations can be used instrumentally, conceptually or symbolically (Rich, 1977; Knorr, 1977). While instrumental use refers to situations where MPs make a decision based on evidence, conceptual use indicates that MPs gradually improve their understanding of an object. In addition, symbolic use indicates that an opinion is already made and the MP uses the evaluation to justify a decision. Depending on their openness to evidence, MPs demand evaluations to oppose or support a policy, or to get information to aid a decision process. While opposition is characterized by the MPs' goal to eliminate or replace an existing policy, support aims to protect and keep a policy. In contrast, the strategy information reveals nothing about the MPs' attitude towards the policy, apart from the fact that the MPs are seeking information on the issue.

Purpose: MPs pursue two main purposes when demanding an evaluation. Their goal

is either to change an existing policy, or else to maintain the status quo, yet sensitize some actors to it. While policy change is well established in public policy literature (Sabatier, 2006; Sabatier and Weible, 2014), policy awareness has rarely been discussed. In contrast to policy change, policy awareness emphasizes the importance of a certain policy for a specific group within society. Hence, it is more focused on maintaining the status quo - a task, which is often just as important for MPs as changing a policy (Tsebelis, 1994, 131-135). The purpose of the evaluation has an important effect on the MP's motivation. With both policy change and policy awareness, the MPs can try to satisfy their constituency or their party.

In the following, I argue that the evaluation strategy is shaped by the MPs' expected benefit for a re-election from the perspective of their voters, and by the MPs' perceived party pressure in order to pursue the party's preferred policy position. Depending on their organizational allocation in the parliament, they will assume different legislative roles and thus pursue certain strategies with evaluations. First, the MP's memberships in *parliamentary committees* provide legislative roles. On the one hand, MPs from legislative committees want to influence the legislation process by policy advocacy either based on their voters' or their parties' preferences. They can achieve this by demanding an evaluation, which provides evidence against an existing policy and serves as a basis for a policy change, which is favored by their voters and their party. Moreover, they might also demand an evaluation, which supports a MP's preposition for a new policy by raising awareness of this very policy. In doing so, they either make their constituency aware of their personal work or of the work of their party. On the other hand, MPs of an oversight committee want to appeal to their voters by displaying themselves as controllers of the public administration to their constituency (Strøm, 2000; Bovens, 2005). Hence, they submit parliamentary requests in order to obtain information on a certain policy as well as to fulfill their oversight function. Since they obtain information on a certain policy, they can raise awareness of the effective, respectively ineffective policy without demanding a direct policy change. This legislative role rather addresses the constituency than the party, since

the latter's preference depends on whether the party is part of the government or the opposition. Therefore, I will test following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: MPs from legislative committees will more likely demand an evaluation to oppose or support a policy than MPs from oversight committees; MPs from oversight committees will more likely demand an evaluation to obtain information on a policy.

Second, the MPs' choices of legislative roles also depend on their membership in a *parliamentary group*. In order to foster their parties' policy, MPs might point out how effectively the policy works, as effectiveness is often regarded as a high legitimacy aspect (Scharpf, 1999; Widmer, 2009). In doing so, MPs seek evidence against or for a policy depending on the party group membership. MPs from the same party group as the responsible Federal Councillor will demand an evaluation to support a certain policy, while MPs from different party groups will pursue the same strategy to oppose a policy in order to blame the political opponent (Thesen, 2013). While the former want to maintain an existing policy and raise awareness of the good work of their political group, the latter seek to make a policy change. As a consequence, the MPs motivation lies in the realization of a certain policy outcome or in the expectation of being rewarded by their party during the next election - either by the re-nomination or else by a good position of the party list. Therefore, the following hypothesis is tested:

Hypothesis 2: MPs from the same party group as the responsible Federal Councillor will more likely demand an evaluation to support a policy; MPs from a different party group as the responsible Federal Councillor will more likely demand an evaluation to oppose a policy.

The following section discusses the research design that this article uses to examine the hypotheses. Since the analysis is based on a comparative case study, the section introduces the case selection and gives an overview of the used data and methods.

3.3 Research Design

The bases of the empirical analysis consist of twelve comparative case studies (Yin, 2014). A case is defined as a parliamentary request, which has been submitted by a MP and which demands an evaluation. The cases were selected by keeping as many independent variables as possible constant, while the parliamentary requests differ in the MP's organizational allocation. First, the parliamentary requests vary in the MP's committee membership: legislative or oversight committee.⁶ Second, I distinguish between the parliamentary requests and the MP's ideological affiliation. In doing so, I have compared the party membership of the parliamentary request's author (MP) and it's recipient (Federal Councillor). According to recent studies (Kriesi et al., 2006; Bornschier, 2015), the main cleavage of the Swiss party system proceeds along the left (Social Democratic Party, Green Party) and liberal-conservative parties (Christian Democratic People's Party, FDP, The Liberals, Swiss People's Party). Although these MPs are not in the same party, they are also worried about embarrassing their allied parties, since the federal election allows list combination (Bochsler, 2010). The twelve cases were selected on the basis of the study of Bundi et al. (2016)⁷ following the variation of committee and party group membership. Moreover, I selected eight matching cases. The cases have the same author, but differ in their context, since some MPs have changed their committee or have submitted the parliamentary requests to different departments. According to King et al. (1994, 199-206), matching is one of the most valuable strategies to estimate the causal effect of a variable, since most other control variables are held constant. The case selection included parliamentary requests from both parliamentary chambers. Finally, the selected cases differ in several other factors (e.g. political party, type of parliamentary request,

⁶MPs of oversight committees are often also members in a legislative committee, since the latter is more frequent. I have allocated the MPs according to their statements within the interviews.

⁷Bundi et al. (2016) have identified all parliamentary requests, which demanded an evaluation in the National Council and the Council of States between 2010 and 2014. Since 2010, between 33 and 45 parliamentary requests were submitted by MPs in order to demand an evaluation. However, only a small number of motions are accepted within the chambers, while almost fifty percent of the postulates are finally submitted to the Federal Council. Table 3.3 in the Appendix provides an overview of the demanded evaluations.

Table 3.1: Selected Cases of Parliamentary Requests

	Legislative Committee	Oversight Committee
Different Party Group	(1) Stalking (Mot. 13.3742) (5) Axpo (Inter. 14.3163) (7) New Buildings (Post. 13.3903)	(2) Supplementary Benefits (Post. 12.3673) (11) Prevention Programs (Inter. 12.3498) (10) Professional Integration (Quest. 10.1124)
Same Party Group	(8) Gender Equality (Inter. 13.3270) (3) Lötschberg-Tunnel (Post. 11.3626) (9) Doctor Admission (Post. 12.3218)	(6) Poster Children (Inter. 11.4077) (12) Federal ICT-Projects (Post. 13.4062) (4) Regional Policy (Post. 11.3697)

Note: Mot. = Motion; Inter. = Interpellation; Post. = Postulate; Quest. = Question; Number of Case in parentheses.

federal department). Table 3.1 shows an overview of the selected cases. Although MPs from legislative committees submitted more parliamentary requests, MPs from oversight committees have more submissions in relation to their size, since the number of oversight committees is smaller than that of legislative committees. In addition, MPs tend to submit more requests to Federal Councillors, which are from a different party group. The parliamentary requests are distributed as follows: 79 (36.2%) legislative committee and different party group, 73 (33.5%) legislative committee and same party group, 38 (17.4%) oversight committee and different party group, and 28 (12.8%) oversight committee and same party group.⁸

In order to investigate the cases, I gathered data from a document analysis as well as from guideline-based interviews (Bailer, 2014).⁹ In doing so, I analyzed the text of each parliamentary request, which is available in the database of the parliament (Bundesversammlung, 2016). The database reveals the full text of the parliamentary request, its author, the date of submission, the responsible government department, and a short justification. The guideline-based interviews with the MPs were conducted during March 2016. The study uses a causal-process observation so as to test the influence of the parliamentary allocation on the strategy of policy evaluations. According to Brady and Collier (2010, 318), causal-process observation is "an insight or piece of data that provides information

⁸More details to the cases can be found in Table 3.4 in the Appendix.

⁹One interview was conducted per email, since the MP only had limited time resources (Case 3).

about context, process, or mechanism, and that contributes distinctive leverage in causal inference". I focus on mechanism causal-process observation, which provides information about whether an intervening event posited by the theory can be observed (Mahoney, 2010, 128-129). The study reconstructs the process of parliamentary requests demanding an evaluation with the help of the interviews and analyses of what factors lead to the specific strategy of the evaluation.

3.4 Findings

Table 3.2 presents an overview of the findings of the case studies. The case studies show that the evaluations were mainly used in order to oppose (7) or to obtain information on a policy (4). Only one MP demanded an evaluation in order to support a policy. In order to illustrate the mechanisms of causality behind these variables, the next sections provide detailed information from the case studies.

In total, seven parliamentary requests were submitted by a MP of a legislative committee, which aimed to oppose a policy (Cases 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). In the parliamentary request "Stalking" (Case 1), a prosecutor called the MP's attention to unavailable possibilities of punishment against stalking. In addition, the MP was dismayed by the stalking accusation against the former Chief of Army. Although he admitted some of the stalking accusation, the charge was dismissed. As a consequence, the MP deeply believed that the existing policy was useless to persecute stalking. "This situation could have been solved with a particular article on stalking, as other countries would know already, e.g. Germany (Case 1 - oral interview).¹⁰ According to her, the legal basis failed to protect victims of stalking. The evaluation should have confirmed her information and should have exerted pressure on the Federal Council to take action. The other cases are similar, since the MPs aimed to demonstrate that an existing policy has failed and that one should consider a policy change. The parliamentary request "Lötschberg-Tunnel" demanded an evaluation in order to assess the safety of the tunnel and to oppose the current stage of the tunnel.

¹⁰Original in German or French, author's own translation (applies for all following quotations).

However, in the MP's opinion it was clear that the report would show that an extension of the tunnel was also necessary due to capacity reasons. In her argumentation of the parliamentary request, she makes clear that the evaluation of the current situation of the Lötschberg Tunnel can only lead to the conclusion that an extension is inevitable. Hence, the MP was not really interested in obtaining information on the tunnel, but rather in seeking ammunition for her policy change, since she opposed the current state of the tunnel. In addition, a parliamentary request can also oppose a policy by trying to make the government aware of a problem. The parliamentary request "Foster Children" demanded the Federal Council to assess the placement of foster children to foster families. Since private companies participate in this market, the MP feared that the well being of the children would be in danger. "My main focus was to persuade the Federal Council to change the regulation on foster children" (Case 6 - oral interview). The administration would have needed to deal with the topic, since they are obliged to answer the questions in the interpellations. In order to write a reply, the public servants would need to read up on the subject of foster children, and recognize that there would be a problem.

While most parliamentary requests aimed to oppose an existing policy by illustrating its failure in the evaluation reports, only one parliamentary request aimed to support a policy (Case 11). The parliamentary request "Prevention Programs" aimed to highlight the relevance of the Federal Prevention Programs Tobacco, Alcohol, and Diet & Exercise, which had been extended by the Federal Council in the current year. In doing so, the request asked about the most positive points of an evaluation that had been conducted on the prevention programs the year before (Balthasar et al., 2011; Von Stokar et al., 2011). The MP aimed to link the positive results to the prevention bill, which was connected to the prevention programs. "I expected some support from the evaluation results with regard to the vote on the prevention bill. Hence, I wanted the Swiss upper chamber to be aware of the good work by the policy" (Case 11 - oral interview). Thus, the MP did not directly demand an evaluation, but wanted to discuss an already existing evaluation report in order to gain support for a similar bill.

Table 3.2: Overview of Case Studies

Case No.	Parliamentary Request	Title	Back-ground	Trigger	Strategy	Committee Hypothesis 1	Party Group Hypothesis 2
1	Motion (13.3742)	Stalking	Failure	Personal Interest	Opposition	Legislative (Y)	Different (Y)
2	Postulate (12.3673)	Supplementary Benefits	Change	Personal Interest	Information	Oversight (Y)	Different (N)
3	Postulate (11.3626)	Lötschberg-Tunnel	Failure	Interest Group	Opposition	Legislative (Y)	Same (N)
4	Postulate (11.3697)	Regional Policy	Change	Interest Group	Information	Oversight (Y)	Same (N)
5	Interpellation (14.3163)	Axpo	Failure	Personal Interest	Opposition	Legislative (Y)	Different (Y)
6	Interpellation (11.4077)	Foster Children	Failure	Interest Group	Opposition	Legislative (Y)	Same (N)
7	Postulate (13.3903)	New Buildings	Failure	Interest Group	Opposition	Legislative (Y)	Different (Y)
8	Interpellation (13.3270)	Gender Equality	Failure	Interest Group	Opposition	Legislative (Y)	Same (N)
9	Postulate (12.3218)	Doctor Admission	Change	Personal Interest	Opposition	Legislative (Y)	Same (N)
10	Question (10.1124)	Professional Integration	Change	Interest Group	Information	Oversight (Y)	Different (N)
11	Interpellation (12.3498)	Prevention Programmes	Change	Interest Group	Support	Oversight (N)	Different (N)
12	Postulate (13.4062)	Federal ICT-Projects	Failure	Personal Interest	Information	Oversight (Y)	Same (N)

Note: Support for the hypotheses in parentheses in row committee and party group (yes/no)

In addition, four parliamentary requests aimed to collect information about a policy (Cases 2, 4, 10 and 12). In the parliamentary request "supplementary benefits", the MP made it clear that he was not against the supplementary benefits with the social insurances IV and AHV. However, he observed that the costs highly increased after the rearrangement of the fiscal equalization scheme between the Swiss cantons. He assumed that the reason behind this increase could be found in the long-term care insurance. Since he was not entirely sure, he demanded an evaluation in order to obtain information on the reason behind the supplementary benefits. "I hoped that the report would give me and my

colleagues an idea about what type of action we should take regarding the supplementary benefits" (Case 2 - oral interview). The parliamentary request "Federal ICT-Projects" aimed to illustrate similar behavior patterns, as the MP knew that the ICT projects were poorly managed, but he was missing the information to demand a policy change, so he wanted to give the Federal Council the possibility to adjust the management of the ICT projects. "I did not want to question the process. My goal was to make the Federal Council document and monitor the ICT process, so that one can avoid a mismanagement" (Case 12 - oral interview). The parliamentary request "Regional Policy" demanded an evaluation on the effectiveness and implementation of the new regional policy. The evaluation should include non-governmental experts as well as representatives of the mountain regions and should explicitly be addressed to the Federal Assembly. "The introduction of the new regional policy (...) has extensive consequences for the mountain regions, which are difficult to foresee for the relevant authorities and the population " (Case 4 - written request). The MP would aim to find out whether the mountain regions were negatively affected by the new policy and whether one needed to change anything. Since he was a representative of the mountain regions, he wanted to know whether he would need to attempt any new policy, if the policy failed to serve the mountain regions.

The analysis suggests that the committee membership plays a crucial role for the choice of strategy. While MPs of oversight committees tend to ask for evaluations in order to obtain information (Cases 2, 4, 10, 12), legislative committee members demand evaluations in order to oppose an existing policy (Cases 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). However, the case studies do not provide evidence for the influence of legislative committee members on the strategy to support a policy. In contrast, the case studies show no party group effect. In only three cases (Cases 1, 5, 7), did a MP from another party group than the responsible Federal Councillor aim to oppose a policy, while four parliamentary requests (Cases 3, 6, 8, 9) pursued an opposition of the policy, although the MP and Federal Council were from the same party group. Moreover, the only supportive evaluations were submitted by a MP from another party group. The double cases 5 and 6 display the missing effect

of the party group. Although the parliamentary requests were submitted to two different Federal Councillors by the same MP (one from the same party, the other from another party group), they both pursued the same goal to oppose a policy.

3.5 Discussion

The case studies suggest that the membership in a legislative or oversight committee shapes the MPs evaluation strategy significantly, while the party group of a Federal Councillor does not seem to have an effect. In doing so, the difference between legislative and oversight committee members lies in their use of evaluations. According to the case studies, the MPs from legislative committees mainly interpret an evaluation as means to an end, since their main objective is to influence the policy agenda in order to appear as a policy advocate. This becomes apparent in the statement of one MP: "The evaluation should have come out so that it confirms the information that I already had" (Case 1 - oral interview). In contrast, all MPs from oversight committees emphasize that they are more aware of evaluations and parliamentary oversight in general due to their membership in an oversight committee. Previous studies have shown that MPs from oversight committees demand evaluations more often ([Speer et al., 2015](#); [Bundi, 2016](#)). Evaluations were important instruments for parliamentary oversight and they would be necessary to fulfill their oversight function. One MP highlighted that evaluations are elementary to understand the processes of a policy, since the administration has to provide information on the implementation of it. As a consequence, they position themselves in a different way. One MP explained that he cannot distinguish himself with issues from parliamentary oversight, but he can do so more generally as a MP who controls the government. On the contrary, MPs from legislative committees tend to have a stronger focus on the policy agenda. Although those MPs argued that parliamentary oversight is important, they admitted to not being very aware of the function and relinquish these tasks to the specific committees. If they demand evaluations, they want to influence the political agenda. This finding partly confirms the study of [Zwaan et al. \(2016, 15\)](#), who argues that MPs of the

European Parliament demand evaluations for an ex ante agenda-setting outlook by asking about information on actions that must be taken.

In contrast to the committee membership, the membership in a specific party group does not influence the evaluation strategy. During the interviews, almost all MPs emphasized that the party membership of the responsible government member would not play a role for the submission of the request. One MP stated that the own Federal Councillors were not under preservation order. This would especially be the case for the Council of the States where the party orientation would be less important than in the National Council. Though, some MPs argued that the communication between the MP and the Federal Councillor would be easier. A MP stated that if the Federal Councillor had been from her party, the person might have informed her about the limited acceptance chances within the Federal Council. From time to time, Federal Councillors call the MP's attention to specific issues, so that they have the possibility to become active. However, these MPs must not necessarily belong to the same party, as one MP explained. In addition, several MPs emphasized that the Federal Council is a collective board in which the decisions are taken together with the other members. Another very important point is the Federal Councillor's agenda. Even if the Federal Councillor is from the same party, a parliamentary request could potentially interfere with the coherent strategy of the Federal Councillor.

The missing influence of the party group membership might be explained by several factors. On the one hand, an evaluation is often perceived by MPs as something very technical, which makes it less attractive for party ideological strategy. One MP argued that from time to time there are parliamentary requests, which aim to oppose a policy in order to harm the political opponent. However, the process of an evaluation would be too complicated to realize that. Evaluations should be neutral, as they are independently conducted and provide information for specific questions. As a consequence, one MP argued that if he had to harm the other parties, he would have done it more straightforwardly. On the other hand, the Swiss political system is characterized by a strong consensual

democracy, which integrates all major parties in the government and makes oppositional behavior in the parliament unusual (Lijphart, 2012). Moreover, the national parties are almost absent during the national election campaigns. Since parties in Switzerland are mainly a loose confederation of cantonal parties, the federal party is less important for the reelection of an individual MP (Linder, 2012, 83-85).¹¹ Hence, MPs have fewer incentives to please the own national party.

Although the case studies do not provide evidence for an influence of a party group, they still illustrate how MPs react to electoral vulnerability with parliamentary requests. First and most important, the committee membership provides an opportunity for MPs to present themselves in a specific role to their constituency. Second, in seven of twelve presented cases, an interest group was the trigger behind the parliamentary request, which demanded an evaluation. Switzerland has a strong reputation for the importance of interest groups, since the central state is underdeveloped and the national parties are weak due to limited resources. In contrast, interest groups are well equipped and also institutionally recognized by public authorities (Gava et al., 2017, 2). According to Giger and Klüver (2016), some types of interest groups even influence the link between MPs and their voters. Since interest groups are so powerful, they are also important for MPs in order to get re-elected. Therefore, MPs seek their support when they submit parliamentary requests. In case 4 "Regional Policy" and case 10 "Professional Integration", interest groups played an important role. Both MPs had been approached by interest groups, which reported that a policy had been changed and that some part of society might be disadvantaged. Since the effects of the policy were uncertain, the MPs demanded an evaluation in order to obtain more precise information.

However, this study has some limitations. First and most important, since the analysis is based on a comparative case study with small n, the external validity has to be discussed (Yin, 2014, 48-49). Still, the case selection provided a solid basis in order to assume that the findings are generalizable beyond this study. Second, one has to consider that the

¹¹However, Bochsler et al. (2016) argues that Switzerland shows a trend towards a stronger nationalization of the party system.

least likely case strategy finds its empirical constraints regarding the influence of the party group. While the case studies suggest that the membership in a party group does not determine the strategy of a policy evaluation, there is also the possibility that the characteristics of the Swiss political system are simply too weak to show an effect. On the one hand, [Bailer and Bütikofer \(2015\)](#) show that the power of parliamentary groups is still rather limited. On the other hand, most Swiss MPs are still characterized as semi-professional and pursue an occupation or activity outside of their parliamentary mandate ([Bütikofer, 2014](#); [Bundi et al., 2017](#)). This means that MPs are relatively independent, which might lead to individual decisions regarding the evaluation demand. Last, the study did not take timing into account, which might have a strong influence on the MPs motivation for reelection ([Fujimura, 2016](#)). Parliamentary requests at the end of the legislative term might be more strongly affected by electoral campaigning compared to those in the beginning. Still, the case studies do not provide any evidence that time was an issue, which attenuates the argument that MPs seek reelection with parliamentary requests. However, several interviewed MPs stated that it is almost impossible to predict when the request is discussed with the parliamentary arena.

3.6 Conclusion

Policy evaluations are an important tool for the legislative and oversight function of MPs ([Lees, 1977](#); [Weiss, 1989](#)). This article has investigated which strategies MPs pursue with evaluations by looking at twelve parliamentary requests at the Swiss Federal Assembly between 2010 and 2014. The analysis found that MPs from legislative committees demand evaluations in order to oppose a policy, while MPs from oversight committees request evaluations to obtain information on policies. In contrast, the evaluation strategy is not dependent on the party membership of the MP, which submits the parliamentary request, and the Federal Councillor, who is responsible for responding to it. The findings suggest that parliamentary requests are elementary for MPs in order to appeal to their constituency and to some extent to their party by adopting legislative roles. Depending

on the focus within parliament, the MPs choose different strategies to promote themselves in the public. According to the cases, the appeal to the voters is more important for MPs than for their own party. These findings provide new insights in how electoral vulnerability shapes legislative behavior.

This study has made important contributions to research on evaluation. In general, literature on research on evaluation has mainly dealt with the use of evaluations and has neglected the origins of evaluation up to now (Weiss, 1998; Kirkhart, 2000; Patton, 2008; Johnson et al., 2009). Moreover, scholars have completely left the parliament as a demander of evaluations out of the discussion, although parliamentarians are important stakeholders of evaluations. This article builds on the findings of previous research showing that parliaments frequently demand evaluation reports (Speer et al., 2015; Bundi, 2016; Zwaan et al., 2016). In addition, it shows that MPs pursue different strategies with evaluation. Mark and Henry (2004) discuss the outcomes of evaluation influences. In doing so, they present a schematic theory of evaluation influence building on the traditional understanding of the evaluation's role in the service of social betterment. This study is able to confirm that evaluations are used for cognitive (e.g. agenda setting), and behavioral outcomes (e.g. policy adoption) that might lead to social betterment, as well as showing that MPs also use evaluations in order to achieve personal goals, for instance being reelected. Hence, this study shows that evaluation use must not be restricted to the use of findings (Alkin and King, 2016).

This finding results in a different understanding of evaluation use. Weiss (1999, 477) has argued that evaluators often find it hard to understand why policy makers - including MPs - do not transfer evaluation results directly to the legislation. This study provides an answer to this question regarding the parliamentary arena. Evaluation is not only a tool to learn about a policy, but also to control how a policy becomes implemented. Since evaluations help MPs to oversee the government, they contribute to democracy by strengthening the parliament in their oversight function. In order to make evaluations more relevant for parliaments, evaluators should emphasize the aspect of accountability of

an evaluation. Even if parliaments rarely use evaluations for evidence-based policy making, they still rely on them. MPs demand evaluations in order to confirm their opinion or in order to obtain information for the assessment of a policy. Hence, MPs use the evaluation as an instrument for their purposes rather than making use of the actual findings from the evaluation report. I hope that this understanding of how MPs use evaluations will take roots amongst scholars of research on evaluation.

Appendix

Table 3.3: Submitted Parliamentary Requests for Evaluations, 2010-2014

Parliamentary Request	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014*
Motion	6(1)	7(1)	0(0)	2(0)	3(0)
Postulate	6(3)	8(4)	12(6)	7(3)	4(1)
Interpellation	27	15	27	24	19
Question	3	4	6	3	2
<i>Total</i>	42	33	45	36	28

Note: 2014 covers the submitted parliamentary requests until June 20, 2014. Number of accepted motions and postulates in parentheses. Information provided for the National Council and the Council of States. Source: [Bundi et al. \(2016\)](#)

Table 3.4: Detailed Information about the Selected Parliamentary Requests

Case No.	MP	Request	Title	Responsible Department	Committee	Accepted
1	Doris Fiala, FDP	Motion (13.3742)	Stalking-Thema nicht auf die lange Bank schieben	EJPD (Sommaruga, SP)	Legislative	No
2	Alex Kuprecht, SVP	Postulate (12.3673)	Ergänzungsleistungen zu AHV und IV. Perspektiven 2020	EDI (Berset, SP)	Oversight	Yes
3	Viola Amherd, CVP	Postulate (11.3626)	Folgerungen aus dem Brand im Simplontunnel für den Lötschberg-Basistunnel	UVEK (Leuthard, CVP)	Legislative	No
4	Erich von Siebenthal, SVP	Postulate (11.3697)	Evaluation der neuen Regionalpolitik	EVD (Leuthard, CVP)	Oversight	Yes
5	Jacqueline Fehr, SP	Interpellation (14.3163)	Wird die Axpo zum nächsten Fall Swissair oder UBS?	UVEK (Leuthard, CVP)	Legislative	-
6	Jacqueline Fehr, SP	Interpellation (11.4077)	Stopp der Geschäftemacherei mit Pflegekindern	EJPD (Sommaruga, SP)	Legislative	-
7	Alec von Graffenried, GPS	Postulat (13.3903)	Sind Ersatzneubauten energetisch besser als Gebäudesanierungen?	UVEK (Leuthard, CVP)	Legislative	No
8	Alec von Graffenried, GPS	Interpellation (13.3270)	Zeitgemässer Geist für das Gleichstellungsge- setz?	EJPD (Sommaruga, SP)	Legislative	-
9	Stéphane Rossini, SP	Postulat (12.3218)	Auslaufen des Zu- lassungsstopps für Ärztinnen und Ärzte. Evaluation der Folgen	EDI (Berset, SP)	Legislative	Yes
10	Stéphane Rossini, SP	Question (10.1124)	Kredit für die beru- fliche Integration in der Bundesverwaltung	EFD (Widmer- Schlumpf, BDP)	Oversight	-
11	Joachim Eder, FDP	Interpellation (12.3498)	Nationale Prävention- sprogramme Tabak, Alkohol & Ernährung und Bewegung	EDI (Berset, SP)	Oversight	-
12	Joachim Eder, FDP	Postulat (13.4062)	IT-Projekte des Bun- des. Wie weiter?	EFD (Widmer- Schlumpf, BDP)	Oversight	Yes

Parliamentarians' Strategies for Policy Evaluations

Supplementary Case Description

Introduction

The following section presents the description of the twelve comparative case studies that were analyzed in the article for *Evaluation and Program Planning* (Bundi, 2017). The section shall provide more detailed information on the cases in order to make the results of the comparative analysis more transparent. The case studies are mainly based on guideline-based interviews with MPs, which were conducted during March 2016 and were complemented with a document analysis of the parliamentary requests. The following sections reveal the background of the proposal, the actors which were involved and fostered the submission, as well as the strategy and purpose of the evaluation which was proposed in the parliamentary request. Furthermore, the sections also show the response of the Federal Council and the consequences of the demanded evaluation, as well as whether the parliamentary requests correspond with the hypothesis in the comparative analysis of the article. Finally, the last section discusses further observations and Tables 3.5 and 3.6 provide a summary of all cases.

Case 1: Stop Procrastinating Stalking (Motion 13.3742)

The origin of the motion goes back to 2008, when the MP submitted a parliamentary request¹² in order to introduce a legal basis to prosecute stalking. This request was mainly driven by the affair 'Roland Nef' who used to be the chief of the Swiss Army and was accused of stalking his ex-wife.¹³ The MP stated that the affair 'Roland Nef' had deeply shocked her and that since then, she has been lobbying for the topic. In the meantime, her attention was called to the legal background of stalking by a professional prosecutor, whom she knew personally. According to this prosecutor, the law would not

¹²Motion 08.3495 "Stalking".

¹³Büchi, J. 2015. September 22. Stalker sollen härter bestraft werden. Retrieved from [20min.ch](#).

allow judges to penalize stalking. However, that problem could have been solved with a particular article on stalking, as other countries already know (e.g. Germany). According to the MP, the current law failed to protect victims of stalking. Despite the fact that the National Council accepted the parliamentary request in 2008, the Council of States refused the proposal in 2010 and argued that an article, which provided a legal basis to help stalking victims already existed. This article¹⁴ had been freshly introduced in 2007 and the Federal Council, which also suggested to refuse the motion, promised in their response to the MP that they would commission an evaluation of the article after five years. Since the evaluation report had not been commissioned by September 2013, the MP submitted a new motion in order to urge the Federal Council to present the Federal Assembly with the evaluation, as promised, and to discuss new measures against stalking.

The strategy of the MP's evaluation request was to obtain evidence to oppose the current policy. In doing so, the MP stated that her most important goal was to have the Federal Council supply the evaluation later. She was under the impression that the Federal Council procrastinated the evaluation report for reasons unknown to her. She was very confident that the evaluation would show that the legal basis to persecute stalking was not sufficient and that a stalking article was needed. In other words, the MP expected a confirmation of the information that she had already obtained from the prosecutor. In her opinion, the additional evidence from the evaluation would convince the Council of the States to revise their opinion on the necessity of a stalking article. Since she was sure about the outcome of the evaluation, she wanted to use the evaluation to convince other MPs. In doing so, the evaluation should especially target the Council of States and the Federal Council, which both had previously refused a stalking article.

Although the Federal Council shared the MP's opinion in their response that the legal basis for stalking was insufficient, they rejected the MP's motion. According to their answer, the evaluation was initiated in 2013 and the report was expected to be published a year later. The Federal Council wanted to wait until the evaluation report was published

¹⁴Art 28b ZGB, SR 2010.

before any specific measures were taken. Indeed, the evaluation on the implementation and impact of the article 28b was published in 2015, pointing out that the Article 28b would insufficiently protect victims of stalking, since civil protection could not be enforced by the police (Gloor et al., 2015). Soon after, the National council accepted the motion and the decision was delegated to the Council of States. However, the Council of States rejected the motion yet again and followed the Federal Council's recommendations. During the debate, Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga argued that the Federal Council would use the results of the evaluation in order to present a revision of the present article 28b. In doing so, the Federal Council decided not to introduce a new bill, but to improve the current legal basis, so that stalking could be prosecuted more easily. Overall, the MP was disappointed by the Council of States' vote. Surprisingly, the MP only briefly took note of the evaluation report, albeit the report actually supported her claims. Although the MP was not successful with the introduction of a stalking article, the parliamentary request was one factor that fostered the realization of the planned evaluation on stalking.

The case supports both hypotheses. On the one hand, the MP clearly stated that she wanted to have the evaluation done in order to oppose the current legal article which did not provide sufficient protection against stalking. As the MP assumed that the evaluation report would support her position, she fostered the evaluation in order to obtain evidence to convince the Federal Council and the Council of States of her policy proposal. On the other hand, the MP and the responsible Federal Councillor do not belong to the same party, which corroborated with the second hypothesis. However, the MP did not demand the evaluation in order to harm the Federal Councillor. Instead, she argued that the communication might have been better between her and the Federal Council if the Councillor had belonged to the same party. Thus, the case supports the hypothesis, but presents another theoretical explanation for the reason behind the evaluation.

Case 2: Supplementary Benefits for AHV and IV. Perspectives 2020 (Postulate 12.3673)

The system of supplementary benefits changed fundamentally during the course of the rearrangement of the national fiscal equalization (NFA)¹⁵ in 2008. In doing so, the costs have increased significantly over time and have amounted to 4.275 billion Swiss Francs (Bundesamt für Sozialversicherungen, 2016). In contrast, the costs for the old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) and the disability insurance (IV) pensions decreased during the same time. Thus, the MP assumed that a connection between these two developments must exist.¹⁶ Since the MP is a qualified insurance salesman, he had been involved in the Swiss social security system for almost forty years, particularly in financial precautions. Hence, he had developed a strong interest for this topic and therefore he was deeply worried about the recent developments of the supplementary benefits' costs. Moreover, the revision of the pension system was planned for 2020. Therefore, the MP wanted a report, which investigated the consequences of the policy change. The report should be part of the next effectiveness report of the NFA and should present the perspectives of the supplementary benefits until 2020.

The MP demanded the evaluation to obtain information in order to make adjustments in the revision of the pension system. Although he assumed that the reason behind the increase of the supplementary benefits was the long-term care insurance, the MP was not completely sure about the exact relationship. He hoped that the report would give himself and his colleagues an idea about what type of action they should take regarding the supplementary benefits. Overall, the MP's goal was to make the parliament aware of this development, which was a result of the policy change in 2008. Since he was interested in the information, he hoped that the parliament would draw the right conclusion from

¹⁵The national fiscal equalization is a compensation system between the individual cantons in Switzerland and the Confederation, which supports cantons, which are worse off due to resources, geographical-topographical and sociodemographic differences (Bundesgesetz über den Finanz- und Lastenausgleich, FiLaG, SR 613.2).

¹⁶The old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) and the disability insurance (IV), together with the supplementary benefits, build the first pillar of the compulsory pension insurance in Switzerland (Bundesgesetz über die Alters- und Hinterlassenenversicherung AHVG, SR 831.10, Bundesgesetz über die Invalidenversicherung, IVG, SR 831.20 and Bundesgesetz über Ergänzungsleistungen zur Alters-, Hinterlassenen- und Invalidenversicherung).

the report. The MP saw reports as a basis of the political work, which indicates what the parliament has to do and which actions should be implemented in the legislation. However, he also emphasized the oversight role of the parliament. Since the parliament cannot monitor all activities of the authorities, they have to focus on the most important issues. According to the MP, the strong increase of supplementary benefits is a highly important issue, which should be evaluated.

The Federal Council replied to the MP that they shared his view on the necessity of a report on causes of the supplementary benefits' increase over the last years. However, the government preferred the report not to be allocated to the next effectiveness report of the NFA for the period 2012-2015, but rather in an independent report, since there were also other parliamentary requests on this issue.¹⁷ Since the Council of States supported the postulate, the Federal Council presented a report on the supplementary benefits of the AHV and IV in 2013, which partly supported the MP's hypothesis on the relationship between the policy change in 2008 and the cost developments ([Bundesrat, 2013](#)). Hence, the MP declared himself satisfied with the fulfillment of the request. In June 2014, the Federal Council announced that it planned a revision of the supplementary benefits' system. However, the MP had not yet undertaken any action, since the revision of supplementary benefits was still in the consultation phase.¹⁸

While the case provides evidence for the first hypothesis, it does not show any evidence for the second one. According to the MP, the main goal of the evaluation was to generate an information basis for future decisions. He only assumed a relationship between the decrease of the costs for the AHV und IV on the one side, and the increase of costs of the supplementary benefits on the other side, but wanted to be sure about the causal relationship. In contrast, there is no evidence that shows that the MP wants to blame the Federal Councillor for the ineffective policy. The MP argued that the funding of the

¹⁷[Postulate 12.3602](#) "Reform der Ergänzungsleistungen zu AHV/IV" and [postulate 12.3677](#) "Kein Blindflug bei den Ergänzungsleistungen zu AHV/IV".

¹⁸The consultation phase of the revision started in November 2015 and ended in March 2016. Federal Social Insurance Office. 2015. November 25. Die Reform der Ergänzungsleistungen sichert das Leistungsniveau. Retrieved from [news.admin.ch](#).

social insurances was as a problem that was bigger than ideological positions.

*Case 3: Consequences of the Simplon Tunnel Fire for the Lötschberg-Tunnel (Postulate 11.3626)*¹⁹

The parliamentary request was submitted in the course of a fire occurring in the Simplon Tunnel in June 2006.²⁰ Due to the fact that the tunnel has two individual tubes, the traffic was not completely blocked, but heavily jammed for several days. The MP argued that a similar incident would harm the Lötschberg Tunnel, which connects the cantons Berne and Valais, as there would be no possibility of evading to a second tube. In the long term, a double-track of the Lötschberg Tunnel would also be necessary to increase the capacity and to keep the timetable stable. Moreover, the current infrastructure would not be sufficient in the case of an emergency, which is why the MP demanded an evaluation of the current situation. Hence, the request commissioned the Federal Council to elaborate a new assessment of the necessity of the completion of the Lötschberg-Tunnel for security reasons. In doing so, the report should evaluate the fitness for purpose of the current status of the Lötschberg-Tunnel. The motivation for the request was partly based on an informal interest group, as the parliamentary request was mainly supported by MPs from the region of the Lötschberg-Tunnel, the canton of Valais.

According to the MP, the parliamentary request's aim was to oppose the Federal Council's current strategy, which would not include an expansion of the Lötschberg-Tunnel. The MP declared that she hoped for a clear statement on the usefulness of the tunnel's expansion. She said that these days the need for the second tube was even more evident, since the tunnel was reaching its capacity limits: If the transfer of goods to other modes of transport should be promoted, and if you would not want to restrict passenger transportation, the expansion would be necessary despite the commissioning of the new Gotthard Base Tunnel. In her argumentation of the parliamentary request, she makes clear that the

¹⁹The interview for this parliamentary request was conducted via email due to the limited time resources of the MP.

²⁰Schmid, A. 2011. June 10. Güterzug brennt in Simplontunnel. Retrieved from nzz.ch.

evaluation of the current situation of the Lötschberg-Tunnel can only lead to the conclusion that an expansion would be inevitable. Hence, the MP was not really interested in the actual information on the tunnel, but rather in receiving crucial facts, which she could use for her policy proposal, since she supported the expansion of the current tunnel.

The Federal Council suggested to reject the proposal, since they did not see the basis for such a report. The Simplon Tunnel was only closed for four days and the trains were redirected to other routes. The government argued that in the case of a fire in the Lötschberg Tunnel, the rail traffic would remain guaranteed due to the route Frutigen-Brig, which is double-tracked. Moreover, the Federal Council argued that the tunnel complied with the newest safety rules, which is why they did not see any necessity to evaluate the safety concept of the tunnel. The National Council followed the Federal Council's suggestion and rejected the parliamentary request. The MP showed disappointment in the Federal Council's decision as well as in the parliamentary vote.

Again, the case provides evidence for the first hypothesis. Since the MP devoutly believed that the capacity of the Lötschberg Tunnel has to be increased for security reasons, the evaluation was motivated in order to support her claim. She hoped that the report would urge the Federal Council to change its current infrastructure strategy. On the contrary, the MP demanded the evaluation in order to oppose the current policy despite being a member of the same party as the responsible Federal Councillor. However, the origin of the different policy preferences was not different ideological positions, but rather the regional interests that influenced the demand for the evaluation.

Case 4: Evaluation of the New Regional Policy (Postulate 11.3697)

The new regional policy²¹ was introduced in 2008, which replaced the bill on the investment aid for mountain regions (Investitionshilfegesetz). The policy's aim was to support the infrastructure tasks for financial communities in the mountainous regions. Shortly after the policy change in 2008, the MP was contacted by a former National Councillor, who, during

²¹Bundesgesetz über Regionalpolitik, SR 901.

that time, represented an interest group, which focuses on the Swiss Alpine economy. Since the representatives of the mountain regions were not quite able to assess the consequences of the policy change, they wanted to initiate an evaluation, which should observe the outcomes of the new policy. However, the idea behind the evaluation was not only to assess the consequences of the new regional policy for the authorities and for the people of the mountain regions, but also to see whether the new policy was implemented properly and whether the regions were receiving enough financial support. Moreover, the MP argued that a new regional program was planned for the time period between 2016 and 2023, and an evaluation of the situation would be necessary in order to assess whether the needs of the mountain regions were satisfied with the new policy. Hence, the evaluation should include non-governmental experts as well as representatives of the mountain regions and should explicitly be addressed to the Federal Assembly.

According to the MP, with the results of the evaluation he aimed to gain insight on whether the mountain regions were being negatively affected by the new policy and whether any action would be required. As a representative of the mountain regions, he wanted to know whether he needed to attempt any new policy, in case the policy was failing to serve the mountain regions. Another objective was also to influence the questions of the evaluation. An evaluation clause was integrated in the regional policy and the MP knew that an evaluation was going to be conducted during the legislation period. Hence, the MP was very interested in incorporating questions into the planned evaluation, since he wanted to have an information basis on the consequences of the policy change. According to the MP, the focus of the evaluation should have been on the effectiveness of the policy. Although the financial resources were reasonable, one should have checked whether they were being used in an effective way. The addressee of the parliamentary request should rather have been the Federal Council and its agencies than the parliament. The MP wanted to raise the Federal Council's awareness for the consequences of the regional policy change. Since there was no information so far on this issue, the goal of the evaluation was to provide some insight on this matter.

The Federal Council supported the postulate and adverted to the planned evaluation for 2013. Hence, the National Council also voted for the MP's proposal. The Federal Council presented several evaluation reports regarding the effectiveness and implementation of the new regional policy (Kägi et al., 2013; Sager et al., 2013; Zumbusch et al., 2013; Rühl et al., 2014; Zumbusch et al., 2014). In addition, the Swiss Audit Office has also conducted two evaluations on the new regional policy about its implementation in the cantons Bern, Jura and Valais (Eidgenössische Finanzkontrolle, 2012), and about its funding (Eidgenössische Finanzkontrolle, 2014). All evaluations considered some aspects of the MP's request. As the Federal Council considered the request as fulfilled, the postulate was amortized in 2015. However, the MP did not take note of the evaluations despite the multitude of reports. He argued that the interest groups would have let him know if the evaluation had not been satisfactory to them. Moreover, he would also be indignant over the 1 million Swiss Francs, which were reserved for the conduction of evaluations for the regional policy during the time period from 2016 to 2023 (Bundesversammlung, 2015).

The case supports the first hypotheses on the influence of the oversight committee. Although the MP was concerned about the benefits of the mountain regions, he seemed very open towards the results of the evaluation. The most important goal was to obtain information about the consequences of the regional policy, and he felt responsible to oversee the new policy in order to ensure that the policy serves its voters. In contrast, the case provides no evidence for the second hypothesis. Both the MP and the Federal Council belong to a center-right party group, but there was no sign that this fact played any role for the demand of the evaluation. Moreover, the MP would not undertake any action to stress the good work of the government after the publication of the evaluation, although the evaluation presented the new regional policy in a good light.

Case 5: Is Axpo Going to Be the Next Swissair or UBS? (Interpellation 14.3163)

In 2007, Switzerland negotiated a bilateral agreement with the EU in the electricity sector in order to gain access to the European electricity market. However, the EU suspended

all negotiations after the Swiss population accepted the popular initiative *Against Mass Immigration*²² in 2014. According to the MP, this suspension might have major impacts on the Swiss electricity industry. Axpo was planning to make an expensive investment in order to pursue business within the European electricity market. The risk was that the EU would organize their electricity strategy excluding Switzerland and that Axpo would not be able to refund their investment and thus could potentially become insolvent. Since Axpo is owned by the public, the company would represent a financial hazard for the cantons and the tax payers, as previously observed in the case of the former airline *Swissair*.²³ Hence, the request demanded the Federal Council to assess the risks of the Swiss electricity industry after the suspension of the electricity agreement with the European Union in 2014. The MP particularly focused on the energy company Axpo, since it is owned by the public (Swiss cantons). The MP claimed that regarding the energy supply, Axpo was "too big to fail" and that the policy would fail to prevent such occurrences.

The MP demanded the evaluation in order to make the Federal Council aware of the risk, which Axpo could potentially imply for the Swiss tax payer. She used to be a member of the legislative committee of transport and telecommunication for more than ten years and was especially interested in topics related to infrastructure. In the course of this membership, she had been in Brussels at the European Union several times in order to exchange with members of the European Parliament, who also dealt with infrastructure issues. She was told that the European electricity market could develop independently from Switzerland's participation. Hence, she feared that if Switzerland was not part of the European electricity market, Axpo's financial investments could not be regained. She was sure that a possible evaluation would show that the current policy would potentially allow a dangerous situation for the Federal Confederation as well as for the cantons. Hence, her

²²The popular initiative was launched by the SVP and aims to limit immigration through quotas. The EU claims that immigration quotas contradict the free movement of persons between Switzerland and the EU, which was stipulated in the bilateral treaties. Hence, the EU has suspended all current negotiations until this contentious issue is settled between Switzerland and the EU.

²³Swissair used to be the national carrier of Switzerland from 1931 until its insolvency in October 2001. When Swissair went bankrupt, the Confederation aided the airline with an emergency credit of 1.15 billion Swiss Francs from which the Confederation only retrieved 220 million (SDA. May 5th, 2016. *Swissair-Darlehen. Bund erhält 220 Millionen Franken zurück*. Retrieved from nzz.ch).

evaluation strategy was to oppose the current policy, even though she admitted that she did not have a policy proposal, which would solve this problem. However, she insisted that the government made an effort so that Switzerland would become integrated in the European electricity market.

The Federal Council took the interpellation seriously, since its response was unusually long. However, it argued that Axpo is a corporation owned by the public, but the responsibility for the strategic direction of the company and thus for positioning against risks lies with the Board and at the General Assembly of their respective companies. Moreover, the Federal Council referred to the evaluation of the commission of experts, which argued that only the two banks Credit Suisse and UBS would represent a financial risk for the Swiss economy ([Bundesrat, 2010](#)). As a consequence, the Federal Council was not willing to take any actions. The MP was disappointed about the reply, although she was partly able to understand it.

The case seems to support both hypotheses. On the one hand, the MP argued that the evaluation report should have provided evidence to oppose the current situation around the company Axpo, which was a policy failure in her opinion. Despite having a clear stand on the current policy, she did not present an alternative policy, but wished to delegate the possible to changes to the government. Thus, the argumentation of the first hypothesis only partly plays a role. In addition, the argumentation of the second hypothesis does not come across in this case, either. The MP and the responsible Federal Councillor are indeed from different party groups, but the MP did not seek to blame the Federal Council for the policy failure. Instead, she tried to make the government aware of the situation, so that they can revise the policy by themselves.

Case 6: Stop Making Profit with Foster Children ([Interpellation 11.4077](#))

During 2011, various media²⁴ reported that local authorities largely delegated the placement of foster children as well as the monitoring of foster care to private intermediary

²⁴Polli, T. November 24th, 2011. Das ist Kinderhandel. Retrieved from [beobachter.ch](#). Mantel, A. September 3rd, 2011. Ein eigenes Kind von fremden Eltern. Retrieved from [derbund.ch](#).

organizations; so-called family placement organizations. However, the number of equivocal actors was said to have strongly increased in the last years. Moreover, most of these recruitment firms are said to focus on their own profit, therefore a significant part of the invested money is not invested in the future of children, but flows into the pockets of business owners. Since the regulation on foster children had not been revised up to then, the MP demanded to evaluate the placement indicators, on which basis the children are allocated to a foster family.

The main focus of the evaluation was to oppose the current policy and to persuade the Federal Council to change the regulation on foster children. In particular, the MP wanted to have an evaluation of the placement criteria in order to revise them. The MP's aim was to urge the public servants to read up on the subject of foster children. She was very engaged in this topic, since she had served as a co-chairwoman and board member of the interest group *Pflegekinder-Aktion Schweiz* for several years. Although the organization did not suggest this specific parliamentary request, her activities in this field were examined in the context of her engagement for this organization. The non-profit organization is committed to the interests of foster children in order to encourage their development opportunities. In doing so, the organization focused on the placement of foster children, which is why they were engaged in several research projects ([Arnold et al., 2008](#); [Gassmann, 2013](#)). On the basis of these studies, the MP had already submitted several parliamentary requests²⁵ in order to revise the regulation on foster children. According to the MP, the policy field is very influenced by the Swiss federalism, which is why the municipalities can implement the policy on the basis of their own interpretation. Since private companies participate in this market, the MP feared that the well-being of the children would be in danger without a regulation.

The Federal Council replied that they would not consider an evaluation, since the regulation on foster children was planned for 2012 and they wanted to wait and see how the new regulation would prove of value. Nevertheless, the MP was satisfied with the reply

²⁵[Question 05.5270](#) "Veröffentlichung Expertenbericht Pflegekinder", [postulate 02.3239](#) "Pflegekinderwesen in der Schweiz" and [interpellation 01.3344](#) "Umsetzung der Pflegekinderverordnung".

altogether and according to her, some of her suggestions' were integrated in the revision.²⁶

While the case provides evidence for the first hypothesis, it does not show any relevance regarding the second hypothesis. The parliamentary request clearly illustrates how the MP wanted to demand the evaluation in order to find evidence against the current legal situation of the foster children's placements. In collaboration with the interest group, she developed an alternative policy, which the Federal Council should take up for the new legislation. As for the second hypothesis, the request shows that the MP's party group membership does not influence the evaluation strategy. Although the Federal Councillor is from the same party as the MP, the MP still chose to oppose the policy. The author of the parliamentary request is the same as in case 5, but the evaluation strategy is exactly the same despite the responsible Federal Councillor being from a different party in the first case, and from the same party in the second case.

Case 7: Are New Buildings Energetically Better than Building Restoration? (Postulate 13.3903)

In 2011, the Federal Council declared to resist from nuclear power after the nuclear disaster of Fukushima in March of the same year. In the course of that debate, several questions were raised about the efficient use of energy, since one generally assumed that fewer energy resources would be available in the future. According to the MP, the incentive systems for replacement buildings were not very well developed in contrast to the subsidized rehabilitation programs, since the current tax law financially supported energetic refurbishments for existing buildings. However, the MP argued that the promotion of replacement buildings would make sense from a spatial planning point of view, as they would contribute to the increase of building density, which is of high value, even when taking into account the gray energy²⁷. Hence, the MP demanded the Federal Council to present the Federal Assembly with a report that would provide insight into the extent to which replacement

²⁶Pflegekinderverordnung, PAVO, AS 1977 1931.

²⁷The gray energy indicates the required energy that is needed for the demolition and the new construction.

buildings were energetically more efficient than the energetic refurbishment of buildings.

According to the MP, the main goal of the evaluation was to show that it would be more energetically efficient to replace a large number of buildings rather than having them refurbished, so that the Federal Council would consider measures to promote the replacement of dated buildings. At the time of the request, the MP was professionally working in the construction industry and was also active at *Green Building Switzerland*, which is committed to the replacement and modernization of houses. The association originated in the building materials sector, which also was interested in building sustainably. On the topic of construction, he had previously submitted several proposals in this policy field, including an introduction of a comprehensive sustainability label in the building sector. According to the MP, this particular postulate aimed to provide a basis for another parliamentary request that he had submitted at the same time.²⁸ According to the MP, they expected more support for the request by submitting it to both chambers by MPs from left and right parties. Hence, the MP pursued the strategy to oppose the current law. The evaluation's goal was to raise awareness about the fact that rebuilding a construction would often, energetically speaking, make more sense than to renovate the existing building.

The Federal Council did not share the MP's view and referred to another report that was commissioned by the Swiss Federal Office of Energy comparing rebuilding and refurbishment (Ott et al., 2002). From the perspective of the Federal Council, the situation has not changed since 2002, which, according to the Council, would still be valid for the current situation. The report concluded that the amount of saved energy would depend on the prerequisites for an energy-saving renovation. Moreover, the Federal Council had examined the possibilities for a specific financial support program for replacement buildings within the framework of the first package of measures for the Energy Strategy 2050.²⁹

²⁸Motion 13.3119 "Steuerliche Gleichbehandlung von energiesparenden Investitionen bei bestehenden Gebäuden und bei Ersatzneubauten".

²⁹The Federal Council launched the Energy Strategy 2050 after the decision to withdraw nuclear power in the near future. The strategy should ensure that Switzerland would still have enough energy resources as well as reduce the country's energy-related environmental impact.

However, the agencies decided that the financial support for replacement constructions should be applied within the framework of the canton-specific legislation in order to optimize the use of the subsidies. The MP was disappointed with the government's response, particularly since the government also rejected his other motion regarding the tax relief for replacement buildings.

The case finds some evidence, which supports both hypotheses. On the one hand, the MP had a clear policy agenda for introducing a new tax system for replacing buildings. Since his main interest was to realize a new policy, he demanded an evaluation in order to oppose the current status quo. In doing so, he seemed very confident that the evaluation would back up his point of view. On the other hand, the MP seemed to give the impression that the introduction of the new policy was also partly due to the responsible Federal Councillor, who does not belong to the same party group. However, the MP did not demand the evaluation in order to attack the Federal Councillor, but rather to persuade her from his opinion by generating evidence for his point of view. Hence, the evaluation request is rather a result of different ideological views than the aim of harming the political opponent.

Case 8: Is the Equality Policy Still Contemporary? (Interpellation 13.3270)

The Federal Act on Gender Equality³⁰ was established in 1995 and aims to promote the equality of women and men in working life. According to the MP, the policy has been a success story in certain areas, but in the case of key indicators - wage inequality, women's share in top management, part-time work for men - progress is minimal. As a consequence, the traditional family model still represents the norm in Switzerland, which is why the economy has lost an enormous potential of female workers. The policy was still characterized by the spirit of the 1980s and 1990s, according to which equality is primarily a promotion of women. However, the discussion has recently shifted towards a "relational equality paradigm", which neither fully concentrates on women nor on men.

³⁰Gleichstellungsgesetz GIG, SR 151.10.

Thus, the MP demanded an evaluation of the existing policy in order to examine its effectiveness, especially regarding the inclusion of both sexes. Moreover, he raised the question of whether the Federal Council would be prepared to elaborate a new gender equality policy on the basis of the evaluation's findings.

The main goal of the evaluation was to oppose the current equality policy. According to the MP, the request was mainly pushed by the associations *männer.ch*³¹ and *Männerzeitung*³². The MP is an active member in both organizations and has submitted the request in collaboration with them. His claim is that there is a large deficit in the representation of men in the area of equality policy, which is strongly influenced by women. According to the MP, men are often strongly disadvantaged in equality policies. However, the aim was not to immediately revise the policy, but to make the government aware of the current misrepresentation of men in the equality policy. Currently, the question of gender equality is settled at the Federal Office for Gender Equality and the Federal Commission for Women's Issues, which are both dominated by women. The MP was confident that the evaluation would illustrate that there was a lack of representation of men's interests within the current policy and that the Federal Council would consider a change.

In its response, the Federal Council highlighted that the current gender equality policy aims to promote the effective equality of women and men in working life. The Federal Council claimed that it already considers measures, which include the focus of men ("Make it work. Männerprojekte für mehr Gleichstellung im Erwerbsleben"). Moreover, the Federal Council had already commissioned an evaluation in 2005 in order to examine the effectiveness of the current policy (Stutz et al., 2005).³³ On the basis of this evaluation, the Federal Council decided that the current policy was effective and that there was no urgent need for a revision. Therefore, the Federal Council did not see any need for a new evaluation.

³¹*Männer.ch* was established in 2005 as the umbrella organization of progressive Swiss men's and fathers' organizations to promote men's representation in the equality discourse.

³²The *Männerzeitung* was founded in 2005 and is the platform of organized men's and fathers' movements in Switzerland.

³³The evaluation was based on a parliamentary request by the National Councilor Vreni Hubmann (Motion 02.3142 "Keine Rachekündigungen gegen Frauen, die sich wehren"). The MP demanded that dismissals based on revenge in private employment contracts should be void instead of contestable and that the duration of protection against termination should be prolonged appropriately.

Although the MP did not agree with the response, he was satisfied with the interpellation, which raised awareness on the male perspective in the gender equality policy within the government.

The case is able to support the first hypothesis, while the second one has to be rejected on the basis of these findings. Similarly to the previous case, the MP had a clear idea of a new policy that he establishes in collaboration with an interest group. In doing so, the evaluation had the goal to provide evidence that supported his policy and at the same time showed the misfit of the current policy. Regarding the second hypothesis, the MP also sought to oppose the policy although he belongs to the same party group as the responsible Federal Councillor. Instead of supporting the policy, the MP aimed to promote himself and his policy at the expense of the Federal Council.

Case 9: Expiration of the Doctor Admission Moratorium. Evaluation of the Consequences (Postulate 12.3218)

In 2001, the Federal Council introduced a moratorium for the admission of new doctors, as they assumed a relation between the number of doctor's offices and the increasing health care costs. In doing so, the federal government was authorized to admit providers of compulsory health insurance, depending on a proven need for a period of up to three years.³⁴ The moratorium was extended three times in total, until the Social Security and Health Committee of the Council of States decided to end the temporary admission stop by the end of 2011. Thereafter, the cantons received hundreds of new applicants for the medical occupation. According to the MP, the unregulated admission of new doctors would challenge the demographic distribution of health care in Switzerland. As cities and agglomerations are very attractive working areas, the coverage of medical care would lead to an over-supply in those very areas and to an under-supply in the rural areas. Thus, the MP demanded an evaluation, which would examine the consequences of the expiration of the doctor admission moratorium on the medical coverage in the cantons. He stressed to

³⁴Art 55a, Krankenversicherungsgesetz KVG, SR 832.10.

evaluate the overall impact on the location of new doctors' offices, the specialist areas, health costs and a potential medical over- or under-supply.

According to the MP, his main goal was the re-introduction of the moratorium for the admission of new doctors by the Federal Council, since he preferred a policy change. He had an academic background and had conducted research in the field of social security for many years. Moreover, he even published two books on the problem of the distribution of doctor's practices in Switzerland ([Gilliand et al., 1991](#); [Rossini and Legrand-Germanier, 2010](#)). From his point of view, the authorities knew about the problem that higher admissions would lead to higher expenses, but there was hardly any data on this topic. Moreover, the consequence of the moratorium's end was unknown, as the medical landscape had strongly developed in the last ten years. At the same time, the popular initiative "Ja zur Hausarztmedizin" ³⁵ was launched, which dealt with the same issue. The MP feared that the debate on this issue would be dominated by emotions, as the left-right conflict is especially distinct in this policy field. Therefore, the evaluation should have provided an information basis for the Federal Council in order to make a decision regarding the moratorium. However, the MP clearly stated that he already anticipated what results the evaluation would show and that the report would simply confirm his assumptions.

The Federal Council shared the MP's view and suggested the Federal Assembly to accept the parliamentary request. The response argued that the government was aware of the unknown consequences of the moratorium's end and that it has made a detailed statement on this issue and proposed measures to curb it while responding to another parliamentary request³⁶. However, the Federal Council admitted that an evaluation of the consequences could provide important information on the development of the situation, since it would integrate all political actors. Although the National Council accepted the

³⁵The popular initiative "Ja zur Hausarztmedizin" was submitted in 2010, but the initiative committee withdrew the proposal after the Federal Assembly passed a direct counterproposal which was accepted by the Swiss people with 88%. Since then, the constitution has demanded that the Confederation and the cantons ensure a high quality of medical care that is accessible to all, and to promote family medicine as an essential component.

³⁶[Interpellation 11.3892](#) "Zulassungsstopp für die Eröffnung von Arztpraxen. Auswirkungen auf die Kantone".

parliamentary request, the postulate was depreciated in 2015. The Federal Council argued that in the meantime, it has adopted its dispatch regarding the amending of the Federal Law on Health Insurance, which was accepted by the Federal Assembly Parliament.³⁷ Thus, an evaluation of the consequences of the abolition would therefore no longer be relevant. Albeit the MP was satisfied that the government accepted his proposal, he was partly disappointed, since he would have preferred the realization of the evaluation.

The case offers evidence for the first hypothesis, but does not suggest an effect of the party group membership. After the Federal Council changed its policy regarding the doctor admission process, the MP sought an evaluation in order to show how the policy change had lead to mismanagement. Hence, the evaluation's goal was clearly to oppose the policy, in particular since the MP was not open towards the results of the evaluation. However, the MP used to be a member in the Control Committee, with the exemption of 2012³⁸ when he submitted this very parliamentary request. Although he was still strongly aware of parliamentary oversight, he admitted that in that year, his focus was rather on legislative issues. Similarly to previous cases, the party group membership does not explain the evaluation strategy. Albeit the MP is from the same party as the responsible Federal Councillor, he was not willing to support a policy that he believes is ineffective.

Case 10: Credit for the Occupational Integration in the Federal Administration (Question 10.1124)

The Federal Administration has a credit for occupational integration, which is intended to support the reintegration of sick and injured employees and promote the training, employment and retention of employment of people with disabilities. In 2009, the Federal Council changed the criteria for the allocation of resources. The new system created a financial incentive for the administrative units to prevent disability as far as possible. In this way, work trials and the gradual reintegration could be funded on the basis of a case

³⁷BBl 2012 9439.

³⁸In 2012, the MP served as president for a legislative committee, which requires the resignation from other committees according to the rules of his party.

management of the personnel and social counseling services of the Federal Administration. However, the MP was afraid that the changes might result in fewer people with disabilities benefiting from the credit. Thus, the MP wanted to know from the Federal Council how they would assess the consequences of the change.

The MP's strategy was mainly to obtain information on the policy change. Due to his professional academic background as well as his membership in the Social Security and Health Committee, the MP had been dealing with the same issues for several years, particularly within the revision of the disability insurance. Hence, he had been contacted by an interest group to call his attention on the changes that had been implemented since 2009 regarding the credit for occupational integration. Since the MP had not been aware of the modification of the credit of the professional integration, he decided to seek information on this issue by submitting a parliamentary request to the Federal Council. According to the MP, he was indifferent towards the changes, but he nevertheless considered them sufficiently important for investigation. The aim of the evaluation was to sensitize the situation to the Federal Council. The evaluation was to have a special focus on the effectiveness of the policy and should have showed that the concerned employees still benefited from the reintegration program.

In their response, the Federal Council stressed that they were taking the subject seriously. The response argued that the Federal Council had no information about the credit disadvantaging certain people. Moreover, the Council claimed that they would evaluate the changes after three years, which had not yet been done at that point, although there were other reports, which analyzed the measures of the Federal Administration in order to integrate people with disabilities ([Eidgenössische Finanzkontrolle, 2011](#); [Egger et al., 2015](#)). However, the Federal Council's response was secondary for the MP, as he had not primarily hoped for a conducted evaluation. His most important goal had been to make the government aware of the new situation and that they would consider taking appropriate measures - if necessary.

The case provides evidence for the first hypothesis, but not for the second one. The MP

used to be a member in the Control Committee, for which he served during several years. Thus, the parliamentary request was strongly motivated by the idea to obtain information on the implementation of the policy and to oversee the practice of the Federal Council. In contrast, the membership was not very important for the evaluation strategy. Despite the fact that he belongs to a different parliamentary group than the responsible Federal Councillor, the MP demanded an evaluation in order to obtain information. However, the policy is rather technical and it is questionable whether he could promote himself to his voters with such a policy.

Case 11: Federal Prevention Programs Tobacco, Alcohol, and Diet & Exercise (Interpellation 12.3498)

The parliamentary request was submitted in the course of the *Federal Law on Prevention and Health Promotion*, of which the final vote took place in September of 2012. The policy had adopted federal regulations for the control of widespread or malignant diseases. The aim was to improve the management, coordination and efficiency of prevention, health promotion and early detection measures. The policy was developed with the Federal Office of Public Health and had intended a strategic role for *Health Promotion Switzerland*³⁹ (Bundesrat, 2009). The MP is strongly linked to the latter, as he served as the president of the foundation until March 2012. Since he knew that the approval of the Prevention Law - which he supported - would be precarious, he wanted to have a discussion about previous evaluations, of which the results showed a positive effect of the programs (Balthasar et al., 2011; Von Stokar et al., 2011).

The MP's intention for discussing the evaluation results of the federal prevention programs was to support the Prevention Law. He estimated that the response to the interpellation would come out in the end of August, shortly after the discussion on the Prevention Law. According to the MP, he wanted to encourage a discussion, and it was important to him that he could respond to the answer of the interpellation. In doing so, he already knew

³⁹Health Promotion Switzerland is a private foundation, which is supported by cantons and insurers. The foundation initiates, coordinates and evaluates measures to promote health and to prevent disease.

about the positive results of the evaluations, which showed that the prevention programs were effective. Hence, he was particularly interested in hearing the Federal Council state how effective the prevention programs had been operating.

The Federal Council did not disappoint the MP. The government, which also strongly supported the Prevention Law, pointed out the positive results of the evaluations and the assets of prevention programs in an unusually long reply. Thus, the MP was very satisfied with the answer, especially as the Council of States had had a small debate on the merits of the prevention programs. However, the Prevention Law was buried by the Council of States after a conciliation committee⁴⁰ had elaborated an alternate proposal. Overall, the MP was disappointed by the outcome of the vote.

This case is the only parliamentary request that does not provide evidence for the first hypothesis. That being said, the demanded evaluation is the only one that has the motivation to support the policy. The MP is a member of the Control Committee and also quite active in parliamentary oversight. However, he was also deeply engaged in the legislative area of health, to which he is strongly linked by his occupational and political background. In contrast, the MP supported the policy although he belongs to a different party group than the responsible Federal Councillor. His target was not to highlight the good work of the government, but rather to pursue his legislative targets - the acceptance of the prevention law.

Case 12: Federal ICT-Projects. Quo Vaditis? (Postulate 13.4062)

Several ICT-projects of the Federal Administration had to be cancelled in the last couple of years due to mismanagement. The ICT-project *Insieme*⁴¹ by itself cost Switzerland over 100 million Swiss Francs. The abandonment of the project attracted high attention in society and media. According to the MP, the project management of the Federal

⁴⁰If the National Council and Council of States still have differences following three detailed discussions in each Council, a conciliation committee is appointed. This committee is responsible for seeking a compromise solution (Art 91, ParlA, 171.10 SR).

⁴¹*Insieme* was a ICT-project, initiated by the Federal Tax Administration in 2001 to replace the separate IT systems of stamp and value added tax. The Federal Council decided to cancel the project in 2012 (Finanz- und Geschäftsprüfungskommission der eidgenössischen Räte, 2014).

Government needed to be critically questioned and compulsorily improved, so that new projects could be completed. Hence, the MP wanted to give the Federal Council the opportunity to investigate their ICT-project management and wanted them to draw lessons from the previous projects' failures. The parliamentary request demanded the Federal Council to present a report on the ICT-projects of the Federal Administration. In addition, the same postulate was also submitted by his party in the National Council at the same time.⁴²

The MP wanted to evaluate the project management of the Federal Administration in order to receive information about the process. His aim was not to question the whole project management process, but it was rather a matter of clearly documenting and manifesting that one could not carry out ICT-projects with that kind of management and (non-)control. In the case of *Insieme*, a large number of external ICT-specialists was employed, who disavowed the internal ICT staff. The oversight of these people, however, is not within the competence of the parliament. The parliament granted them the money and assumed that the processes would be carried out properly. After the Control Committee and the Finance Committee of both councils decided to investigate *Insieme*, the MP had the impression that the project management of such ICT-projects generally needed to be evaluated. In doing so, he did not question the specific projects, but rather wanted to evaluate their processes and the efficiency of the assigned financial resources. He stressed that he did not have an opinion about how the processes should be reorganized, but he felt the need that the parliament and also the government should obtain more information on how the projects are conducted. However, he assumed that some know-how was missing in the government, as many tasks were delegated to private organizations. This also made the oversight more difficult for the parliament.

The Federal Council supported the MP's postulate and presented a report in 2014 ([Bundesrat, 2014](#)). In order to ensure an independent evaluation, the Federal Council commissioned the Institute for Business Informatics of the University of St. Gallen to

⁴²[Postulate 13.4141](#) "IT-Projekte des Bundes. Quo vaditis?" by the FDP.The Liberal party group.

analyze ICT-projects, to draw lessons from them and to propose measures. The study found that insufficient control or management had led to difficulties in over two-thirds of the investigated objects. Moreover, the report argued that major difficulties are not attributable to the ICT-aspects of the projects, but rather to the framework conditions in the agencies. The MP registered the report and was satisfied with the processing of the Federal Council. The report was the basis for further reports from the oversight committees. According to the MP, the Federal Council had made the right conclusions.

The case is able to find evidence for the first hypothesis, while the second hypothesis cannot be supported based on the findings. The MP demanded the evaluation in order to obtain information on the process management of the Federal Administration. In doing so, he was open towards the results and also delegated the implementation of the recommendations of the evaluation to the government. The MP wanted to have the evaluation, since he had the impression that the parliament should take actions due to the previous mismanagement. In contrast, the MP did not demand an evaluation to point out the good work of the government, albeit he belongs to the same party group as the responsible Federal Councillor. Instead, he decided to provide the government with an opportunity to obtain information about previous projects, so that they can improve future actions.

Additional Observations

The case studies provide pronounced evidence for the impact of committee memberships on the evaluation strategy, while the party group membership does not play any role at all.⁴³ Furthermore, the comparison of the cases reveals three additional observations. First, the cases suggest that there is not a clear relationship between the background of a policy and the evaluation strategy. Albeit there is a slight tendency that policy failures lead to an oppositional evaluation, and that policy changes lead to an evaluation in order to provide information, the amount of cases is too small in order to draw conclusions.

⁴³For a full comparative analysis of the results, see section 5 in [Bundi \(2017, 7-8\)](#).

Moreover, the theoretical explanation for such a relationship has not yet been developed, even though it seems plausible that MPs seek to raise awareness about failed policies and obtain information about policy changes. Second, the trigger of the parliamentary request does not influence the evaluation strategy. The cases do not reveal any pattern regarding whether interest groups prefer oppositional, supportive, or informative evaluations. However, [Varone et al. \(2017\)](#) suggest that interest groups are more likely to seek evaluations in some policy fields than in others. In contrast, it seems doubtful to which extent personal interest can make a contribution to explain the evaluation strategy of a parliamentary request. Third, the characteristics of the parliamentary request (e.g. the type of instrument, the party of the author or the number of co-sponsors) do not seem to be relevant for the evaluation strategy. Again, the limited external validity due to the research design does not allow any conclusion, but the interviews did not suggest any theoretical connection whatsoever.

Table 3.5: Summary of Case Studies 1-6

Cases						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Parliamentary Request	Motion (13.3742)	Postulate (12.3673)	Postulate (11.3626)	Postulate (11.3697)	Interpellation (14.3163)	Interpellation (11.4077)
Topic	Stalking	Supplementary Benefits	Lötschberg-Tunnel	Regional Policy	Axpo	Foster Children
MP, Party	Doris Fiala, FDP	Alex Kuprecht, SVP	Viola Amherd, CVP	Erich von Siebenthal, SVP	Jacqueline Fehr, SP	Jacqueline Fehr, SP
Committee	Legislative	Oversight	Legislative	Oversight	Legislative	Legislative
Council	National Council	Council of States	National Council	National Council	National Council	National Council
Co-Sponsors	63	4	20	20	16	28
Parties of Co-Sponsors	BDP, CVP, FDP, SP, SVP	CVP, FDP, SVP	CVP, SP, SVP	CVP, FDP, GPS, SP, SVP	GLP, SP	SP
Accepted	No	Yes	No	Yes	-	-
Responsible Department	Justice and Police	Home Affairs	Environment, Transport, Energy and Communication	Economic Affairs	Environment, Transport, Energy and Communication	Justice and Police
Federal Councillor, Party	Simonetta Sommaruga, SP	Alain Berset, SP	Doris Leuthard, CVP	Doris Leuthard, CVP	Doris Leuthard, CVP	Simonetta Sommaruga, SP
Policy Background	Failure	Change	Failure	Change	Failure	Failure
Trigger	Personal Interest	Personal Interest	Interest Group	Interest Group	Personal Interest	Interest Group
Evaluation Strategy	Opposition	Information	Opposition	Information	Opposition	Opposition
Support Hypothesis 1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support Hypothesis 2	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No

Table 3.6: Summary of Case Studies 7-12

Cases						
	7	8	9	10	11	12
Parliamentary Request	Postulate (13.3903)	Interpellation (13.3270)	Postulate (12.3218)	Question (10.1124)	Interpellation (12.3498)	Postulate (13.4062)
Topic	New Buildings	Gender Equality	Doctor Admission	Professional Integration	Prevention Programmes	Federal ICT-Projects
MP, Party	Alec von Graffenried, GPS	Alec von Graffenried, GPS	Stéphane Rossini, SP	Stéphane Rossini, SP	Joachim Eder, FDP	Joachim Eder, FDP
Committee	Legislative	Legislative	Legislative	Oversight	Oversight	Oversight
Council	National Council	National Council	National Council	National Council	Council of States	Council of States
Co-Sponsors	1	-	11	-	-	20
Parties of Co-Sponsors	GPS	-	SP	-	-	BDP, CVP, FDP, GLP, SP, SVP
Accepted	No	-	Yes	-	-	Yes
Responsible Department	Environment, Transport, Energy and Communication	Justice and Police	Home Affairs	Finance	Home Affairs	Finance
Federal Councillor, Party	Doris Leuthard, CVP	Simonetta Sommaruga, SP	Alain Berset, SP	Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, BDP	Alain Berset, SP	Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, BDP
Policy Background	Failure	Failure	Change	Change	Change	Failure
Trigger	Interest Group	Interest Group	Personal Interest	Interest Group	Interest Group	Personal Interest
Evaluation Strategy	Opposition	Opposition	Opposition	Information	Support	Information
Support Hypothesis 1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Support Hypothesis 2	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

Article III

Varieties of Accountability. How Attributes of
Policy Fields Shape Parliamentary Oversight

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4.1 Introduction

Accountability and its importance for contemporary democracies has been widely discussed in literature, especially in the relationship between parliaments and governments (Strøm et al., 2006; Olsen, 2015). In doing so, the question of how parliaments execute their oversight function has attracted growing interest lately (Karlas, 2012; Winzen, 2012; Stapenhurst and Pelizzo, 2012; Blom-Hansen, 2013). However, these studies often ignore that parliamentary oversight might vary across policy fields, since policy fields differ in their institutional settings, involved actors and available resources. Indeed, several studies for the European Union show that accountability varies across agencies and policy areas (Egeberg and Trondal, 2011; Koop, 2011; Hanretty and Koop, 2012; Font and Durán, 2016). Given the different natures of policy fields, this study considers the question of why members of parliament (MPs) aim to oversee some policy fields more frequently than others.

This paper argues that policy fields are shaped by policy attributes, which influence the MPs' need for accountability differently. In general, the demand for accountability has increased in the last couple of decades, since the implementation process of many policy fields has changed fundamentally (Benz et al., 2007). While policies used to be implemented top-down by agencies, they are nowadays more often realized through private organizations within policy networks. The article develops the argument that the implementation process within policy networks leads to different needs of parliamentary oversight. In policy fields where cooperative forms of governance are more present, the need for accountability is higher, since the MPs have more difficulties to oversee such processes and have stronger incentives to control those areas (Papadopoulos, 2007). The study examines the hypotheses that the extent of delegation and legitimation in a policy field influences the MPs' likelihood to execute parliamentary oversight.

These arguments are analyzed by using the example of parliamentary requests demanding a policy evaluation in Switzerland. Several studies have recently shown that

parliamentary requests or questions are used by the parliament in order to oversee the government and its agencies (Russo and Wiberg, 2010; Proksch and Slapin, 2011; Martin and Rozenberg, 2014). Parliamentary requests have a particularly important role for parliamentary oversight in Switzerland, since Swiss MPs are not fully professionalized and the oversight capacities are rather weak by comparison. Moreover, evaluations are particularly interesting for MPs to demand within parliamentary requests, as they assess the effectiveness or efficiency of a policy in a systematic and transparent way (Widmer and DeRocchi, 2012, 14). According to Bundi (2016), evaluations do not only provide information for evidence-based policy making, but also help MPs to fulfill their oversight function towards the government. During evaluations, agencies have to provide information on the policy implementation process to the parliament. Hence, evaluations are an effective tool for MPs in order to hold the government accountable (Pollitt, 2006).

Empirically, the article analyzes a survey that was conducted amongst the Swiss MPs at the national and subnational level in 2014. In order to obtain information about their motivation for demanding policy evaluations, the MPs were asked about the role of evaluations within their parliament. Moreover, an expert survey amongst Swiss political scientists provides additional information about policy fields' attributes. Investigating legislative oversight by parliamentary requests, Switzerland is a particularly interesting case. On the one hand, the most common parliamentary requests can be found in the Swiss parliaments (Wiberg, 1995, 187-188). On the other hand, focusing on evaluation demand, the country does not only have a relatively high evaluation culture, but it also has the most developed institutionalization of evaluation within the parliament (Jacob et al., 2015, 19).

This article demonstrates that a MPs' demand for accountability indeed varies across policy fields. In doing so, MPs interpret their oversight role differently depending on the policy field. In those policy fields where more public activities are delegated to private organizations or the need for legitimation is particularly high, MPs are more likely to demand an evaluation, since the need for accountability is higher. Both effects increase with

the policy fields' closeness to science. The findings support the argument that policy fields' attributes have an important impact on how MPs fulfill their parliamentary oversight in a specific policy field.

The next sections are structured as follows: First, section 4.2 discusses how the change in policy implementation has affected accountability. Section 4.3 illustrates the parliamentary oversight institutions in Switzerland. Section 4.4 develops the argument and hypotheses. Section 4.5 introduces data and methods, together with the operationalization. Then section 4.6 presents the results of the analysis. Section 4.7 discusses implications for other countries and oversight institutions. 4.8 concludes the results and discusses the relevance of the findings for further research.

4.2 Policy Implementation and Accountability

The organization of policy implementation has gone through a fundamental change in the last fifty years (Benz et al., 2007). During the 1960s, policy makers were convinced that the administration could plan the policy implementation from top down. However, Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) showed that this way of implementation did not work, since the administration units did not necessarily implement a policy within the meaning of the policy maker. In doing so, the administration units are influenced by a complex set-up of individual and collective actors, which have varying interests. The literature often argues that modern societies have slightly shifted from government to governance (Mayntz, 2006; Sager et al., 2014).¹ Governance can be referred to as a circumstance, in which collective decisions are made in non-hierarchical independence between public and private actors. Within the so-called cooperative governance, the state does not pursue a sovereign position, but rather tries to steer policy networks indirectly and imperfectly when it seems appropriate (Rhodes, 1997, 53).

However, the policy implementation by networks, involving public actors and non-

¹The literature usually distinguishes between two different definitions of governance. Governance can either be understood as the opposing model to government or as all possible forms of governing (Bevir, 2013). This article refers to the first understanding.

public actors, entails problems of accountability. According to Bovens (2007, 470), accountability is defined as "a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pose judgment, and the actor may face consequences". In doing so, cooperative governance is not primarily designed for democratization of policy making, but for a solution to functional problems. Papadopoulos (2007, 473-483) identifies four problems of accountability caused by cooperative governance: First, policy networks have a weak visibility. Decisions within policy networks tend to be informal and the responsibility is shared amongst a large number of actors (Bovens, 1998). Since policy networks are often uncoupled from the public authorities, the capacity for the administration units to oversee the networks' activities is complicated. Second, policy networks are typically composed of various actors, such as bureaucrats, policy experts, and interest representatives. Indeed, public servants are accountable to the government, but this administrative accountability is less pronounced than in other relationships (Christiansen, 1997). Furthermore, policy experts and interest representatives are even less accountable. Third, policy networks consist of complex structures on multiple levels where decisions are made across levels (Hooghe and Marks, 2003). Negotiations across levels are often more informal and impede accountability, as these are usually not publicly accessible. Last, relations between actors in policy networks also cause problems with accountability. A peer accountability rises within a policy network when participants of policy networks evaluate their counterparts (Grant and Keohane, 2005). Particularly when the composition of policy networks does not change over time, there is a certain probability that participants may be more accountable to their negotiation partners than towards the public.

Public administration literature on third-party governance has mainly debated about to what extent policy networks can be made accountable (Posner, 2002; Koliba et al., 2011). However, the lack of accountability in cooperative governance not only affects the public administration, but also the parliament. In doing so, policy implementation within policy networks tightens the problem of parliamentary oversight due to agency problems.

Naturally in all democracies, agency problems occur between the parliament and the administration. According to [Strøm \(2000, 266\)](#), the policy process can be described as a chain of delegation, in "which those authorized to make political decisions conditionally designate others to make such decisions in their name and place". In a legislative-executive relationship, MPs pass bills and delegate their implementation to the administration. The delegation process generates a principal-agent relationship between the parliament and the administration ([Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991](#)). The parliament (principal) commissions the agency (agent) to implement the policy in exchange for a reward (financial and personal resources). Since an agency may have other interests than the parliament (*bureaucratic drift*) and it may also have an information advantage (*information asymmetry*), the MPs cannot be sure that the administration implements the public policies in their sense. Hence, the problems of bureaucratic drift and information asymmetry give the MPs incentives to oversee the government ([Lupia, 2003, 44](#)).

The way in which policies are implemented is crucial for MPs. If they cannot be sure whether the legislation is implemented in their favor, then they might feel that their personal goals are jeopardized. Several studies have argued that MPs are mainly driven by reelection and good public policy ([Mayhew, 1974](#)). While reelection depends on the public perception of the MP's performance within the parliament, good public policy relies on the assumption that the policy is implemented according to the MP's interpretation. On the one hand, voters will not reelect MPs if they have the impression that the politicians did not keep their promises. On the other hand, a public policy will - from a MPs' point of view - not be good if it is not implemented according to the parliament. Since the policy implementation is so important for MPs to achieve their goals, the parliamentary oversight takes an eminent role for their mandate.

4.3 Parliamentary Oversight in Switzerland

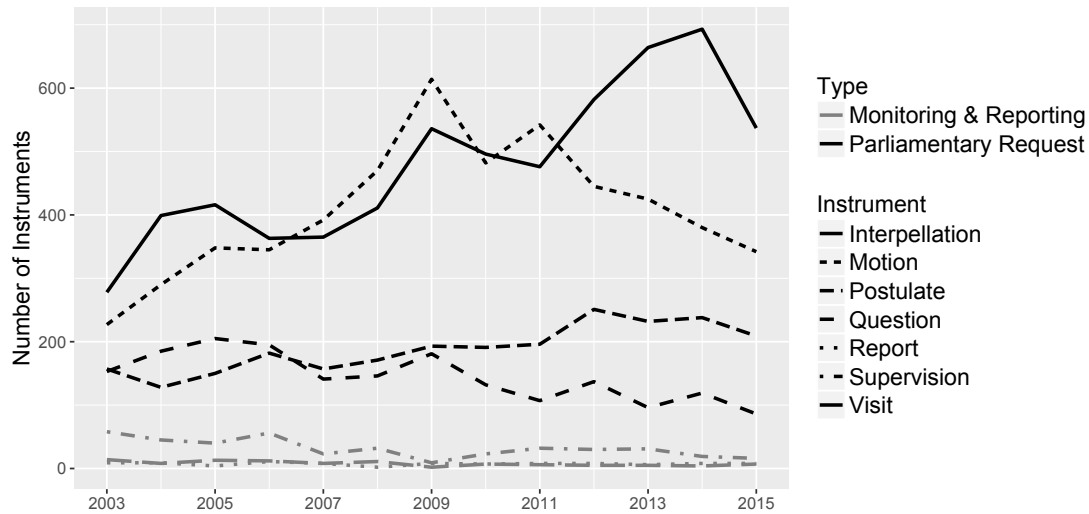
Parliamentary oversight can have different forms of institutional design. [Kiewiet and McCubbins \(1991, 27\)](#) identify four key methods how parliaments may oversee the government

with its agencies: Contract design, screening and selection, monitoring and reports, and institutional checks. While the first two categories apply before the delegation process (*ex ante mechanism*), the latter two appear thereafter (*ex post mechanism*).

In Switzerland, monitoring and reporting as well as institutional checks dominate the parliamentary oversight. In doing so, they are institutionally organized through oversight committees. While the control committees scrutinize the conduct of business by the government and the agencies, the finance committees exercise the supervisory control over the finances of the executive. In doing so, they carry out investigations as well as inspections and review the annual and management reports, which they sum up in written reports with recommendations for the attention of the government. However, the strength of those reports is restricted since the parliaments have limited institutional control capacities. According to (Schnapp and Harfst, 2005), the Swiss federal parliament especially lacks in structures and legal basis for controlling the government, which is essential in order to investigate the government. Unsurprisingly, the committees' reports are often affectless, as the governments often do not respond to their recommendations (Mastronardi, 1990, 139-141).

Since the institutions of parliamentary oversight are limited in Switzerland, MPs have to resort to other means. Recent studies have pointed out the importance of parliamentary requests and in particular of parliamentary oversight (Russo and Wiberg, 2010; Proksch and Slapin, 2011; Jensen et al., 2013; Martin and Rozenberg, 2014). This is particularly eminent in Switzerland, where a rich variety of parliamentary instruments are at the parliaments' disposal and the use of parliamentary requests has more than doubled in the last twenty years (Vatter, 2016, 298). In general, parliamentary requests enable MPs to propose new policies or to obtain information on specific issues. In doing so, parliamentary requests can be submitted by individual MPs, a parliamentary group or a committee. Usually they are signed by several MPs, but most of the time only one MP initiated the request (Bundi, 2017). As a consequence, the requests require very little preparation time, which is why they barely have any costs for MPs (Bailer, 2011). This is particularly impor-

Figure 4.1: Parliamentary Requests vs. Monitoring & Reporting Instruments



Note: The figure illustrates the number of parliamentary requests as well as monitoring and reporting instruments at the federal level between 2003 and November 29th, 2015. Instruments are listed according to their frequency. Reports include evaluations by the Parliamentary Control of the Administration. Supervisions are investigations that are based on leads by a third party. Visits refer to official inspections of agencies by the oversight committees. Source: [Parlamentsdienste der eidgenössischen Räte \(2015\)](#); [Geschäftsprüfungskommissionen der eidgenössischen Räte \(2015\)](#).

tant for Swiss MPs, since they rarely ever have personal assistants and the party offices are relatively small. Figure 4.1 shows that parliamentary requests appear more frequently than monitoring and reporting instruments, which are produced by the oversight committees.

In order to oversee the government, MPs may not only ask questions, but also demand policy evaluations. The request can directly ask for an evaluation or it can be designed in such a way that the executive decides to carry out an evaluation in order to answer the parliamentary proposal. In any case, the government shall pass the initiative to the responsible department or agency, which carries out the evaluation. Evaluations have the advantage that the government has to conduct a profound investigation in order to satisfy the parliamentary request, whilst a question can often be answered with a short response. During an evaluation, agencies have to make their actions transparent and provide information for stakeholders and particularly for parliaments. As a consequence, MPs do not only obtain information on how a policy was implemented, but also whether

the policy was effective or efficient. By using a parliamentary request, parliaments can react to short-dated events and do not have to monitor all the activities of the agencies, which is what they generally prefer (McCubbins and Schwartz, 1984).

Hence, policy evaluations are frequently used to establish accountability in policy networks. While hearings and inspections are difficult and costly to establish with non-public actors, evaluations are an efficient instrument to oversee the policy implementation within policy networks. In doing so, the delegation of an evaluation to the agencies has appealing characteristics for MPs. Evaluation reports that are commissioned by the government are not only an opportunity for MPs to outsource the cost of producing policy expertise, but also to obtain authoritative and objective information. During the evaluation report, the contracted evaluators get access to all kind of information that helps them to understand the policy implementation and overcome the weak visibility of policy networks, as they have easier access to non-governmental policy experts and interest representatives.

However, the policy process differs across the policy fields, which is why the MPs have different incentives to fulfill their oversight function. Depending on the policy fields' attributes, they will submit more parliamentary requests in order to demand an evaluation in some policy fields than in others. Hence, the next section provides an explanation why some policy fields have a higher need for accountability than others.

4.4 Varieties of Accountability Across Policy Fields

Policy fields - also referred to in literature as policy areas, sectors, or domains - cover a certain group of policies, which have a similar social scope. They may be compared to what some authors refer to as *policy subsystems* (Sabatier, 1998). A policy subsystem consists of public and private actors who are interested in a policy problem or issue, and who regularly seek to influence a public policy in a domain. In doing so, they differ not only in their context (actors, size, resources), but also in their nature. As a consequence, policy fields are political arenas in which the political actors find different conditions for behaving.

Variation across policy fields is nothing new to public policy literature. For instance, [Lowi \(1972\)](#) distinguishes four types of policies - distributive, redistributive, constituent, and regulative policy - which shape the political arena by influencing the relationships between the political actors. Moreover, [Baumgartner and Jones \(2010\)](#) characterize the policy field in the *Punctuated Equilibrium Theory* (PET) as the arena where change happens. In doing so, policy fields are characterized by long terms of stability and are only punctuated by short, but severe terms of crisis in which large-scale changes occur, which are caused by destabilizing events or by the accumulation of unaddressed grievances. Since those events do not affect all policy fields at the same time, we can observe policy change in some areas, but not in others. This is partly also true for parliamentary oversight. In doing so, policy fields have certain conditions for the need of accountability, which is the fundamental incentive for MPs to control the agency.

In the following, this section argues that two different characteristics of policy fields influence the need for accountability: The extent of *delegation* and the need for *legitimation*. While the extent of delegated public services is purely descriptive and affects the accessibility of parliamentary oversight, the need for legitimation is rather based on values and determines the MPs' motivation to oversee the policy field. First, the delegation of the execution of public activities to civil organizations is an important attribute of cooperative governance ([Widmer, 2008a](#)). In doing so, the administration delegates parts or a full public service to private organizations, which are responsible for their provision. This process has a lot of advantages, since private organizations are often able to provide a public service with fewer resources or possess know-how to provide a better service. However, the delegation of public services also entails perils. The implementation process of a public policy that is delegated often lacks in accountability, since the implementation process is uncoupled by the administration and executed by a private organization, which does not necessarily have the need to be accountable to the public. Moreover, such an implementation is more difficult to oversee for the parliament, which is why the MPs have stronger incentives to fulfill their oversight function. Several studies have observed a

higher evaluation activity in those policy fields that delegate more public activities to such actors (Verhoest et al., 2007; Widmer, 2008a). I argue, that in those policy areas where the administration delegates a noticeable amount of public activities to non-public actors, the MPs are more likely to demand an evaluation in order to overcome the accountability problem of the policy implementation process:

H₁: The more public services are delegated to non-public organizations in a policy field, the more likely a MP will demand an evaluation with parliamentary requests in this policy field.

Second, shifts from government to cooperative governance have consequences for the legitimacy of the state activities (Van Kersbergen and van Waarden, 2004). According to Scharpf (1999, 7-13), legitimacy can either be the procedures that allow the people to influence political decisions (input legitimacy) or the capacity of the political system to produce effective outcomes (output legitimacy). It has been argued in literature, that policy networks are supposed to increase input legitimacy, since it includes the citizens in the processes of public policies (Benz, 1994). However, those policy networks may cause output legitimacy deficits, especially when democratic accountability is missing. From the perspective of a parliament - a key institution of input legitimacy - cooperative governance structure must not necessarily enjoy high output legitimacy. In general, a public policy is accepted and supported by the population when a policy can solve a problem of the society. Actors within policy networks are not always accountable to the public, but often represent other interests. The less accountable the policy implementation in a policy field is, the more the parliament will have the need to have those activities legitimated. Widmer (2009, 354-355) argues that evaluations can play an important role for the output legitimacy since they indicate which policies are effective and thus can contribute to the solution of a problem. Evaluations can legitimate a public policy ex post proving the rightness of a decision (Majone, 1996; Weiss, 1998). Hence, I argue that in those policy fields where the need to legitimate policy outputs is high, MPs will demand more evaluations in order to inform themselves about the performance of policy networks and to ensure that

policies are implemented in their meaning:

H₂: The higher the need to legitimate policy outputs in a policy field, the more likely a MP will demand an evaluation with parliamentary requests in this policy field.

The next section introduces the data and the methods that the study uses in order to demonstrate how policy attributes influence the parliamentary oversight by Swiss MPs.

4.5 Data and Methods

In order to analyze the variation of evaluation demand across policy fields, the article uses data of an online survey amongst Swiss MPs at the national and subnational level, which was conducted during May and June 2014 (Eberli et al., 2014). The MPs were asked about their relationship to evaluation.² In doing so, the survey provided the MPs with a list of policy fields that they could select from. In order to reduce the complexity for the MPs, ten policy fields were identified on the basis of the Swiss corpus juris. In addition, the policy fields were supplemented with specific key words that illustrated the different areas within a policy field.³ In total, 1570 MPs participated in the survey, which comes up to a response rate of 55.3% (N=2841).

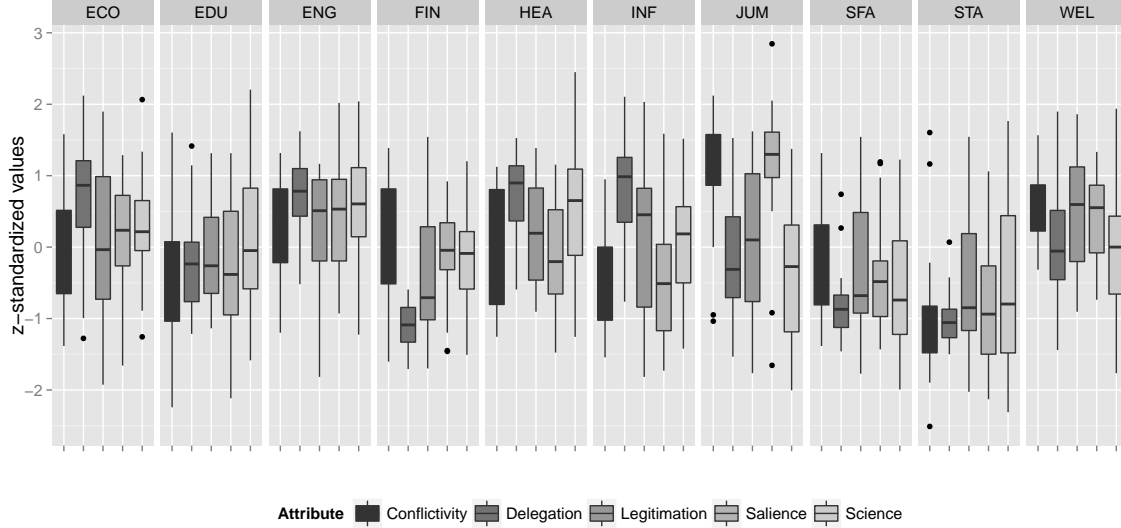
Next to the attributes *delegation* and *legitimation*, the study also considered the policy field's attributes *salience*, *closeness to science*, and *conflictivity*, which are based on different studies about research on evaluation (Weiss, 1999; Haarich and del Castillo, 2004; Frey, 2010; Pattyn, 2014a). The data on the policy fields' attributes was gathered by an expert survey with Swiss political scientists in order to obtain information on the attributes of a policy field.⁴ Hooghe et al. (2010, 692) suggests that expert surveys are appropriate if reliable information can rather be found with experts than in reliable documentary sources.

²Since MPs have a rather broad understanding of an evaluation, the survey gave a definition in the introduction: "In this survey, evaluations are interpreted as studies, reports or other documents, which assess a state's measure in a systematic and transparent way with respect to their effectiveness, efficiency or fitness for purpose."

³A full list of the policy fields with the key words can be found in the Appendix (Table 4.2).

⁴The invited political scientists study Swiss politics and have also completed their PhD. The survey was conducted during April 2015 and generated a response rate of 68.9% (N=31).

Figure 4.2: Distribution of Attributes Across Policy Fields



Since no data is available for the policy fields' attributes in Switzerland, the experts were asked to rate the attributes of the different policy fields. In doing so, the survey provided the same list of policy fields with key words that were included in the survey amongst the Swiss MPs. Moreover, the survey defined the policy fields' attributes and asked the experts to rank the attribute on a scale between 0 and 10.⁵ In order to compare the expert's ratings with each other, the ratings have been standardized. In doing so, the values have been rescaled to a standard deviation of one and a mean of zero. Figure 4.2 illustrates the variation across the policy fields. Not only do the different attributes vary within a policy field, but they also differ across the policy fields. Moreover, the figure shows that the answers of the experts range within a certain spectrum, with some exceptions.

As the study focuses on the differences between the policy fields, the database has been stacked (Van der Eijk et al., 2006). A stacked data set is a matrix that derives from a normal one, the units of analysis do not represent a single MP, but MP×policy field combinations. In this data matrix, each MP is represented by as many cases as there are policy fields. For every policy field, an entry is generated that indicates whether a MP has

⁵The definitions of the policy fields' attributes can be found in the Appendix (Table 4.3).

submitted a parliamentary request in a certain policy field. This allows us to distinguish between policy fields instead of MPs.

The analysis aims to answer the question of whether a parliament has demanded an evaluation in a policy field. In doing so, MPs were asked if they had submitted a parliamentary request in the last four years in order to investigate a public policy regarding its effectiveness or efficiency, and if so, in which policy field. The dependent variable "parliamentary request in policy field" is coded with 0 (no request) and 1 (request). The independent variables delegation, legitimation, salience, conflictivity, and closeness of science are rated on a standardized scale between -2 (low) and 2 (high). In order to control for the institution dimension of a policy field, a variable is included that indicates the public expenditure of a policy field. Since the attributes of policy fields partly correlate, the variables are separated in the models and are combined in interaction terms in order to avoid multicollinearity (Brambor et al., 2006).⁶

Moreover, several other control variables on the individual and parliament level are tested. On the MP level, age, sex, level of education, party membership, member of an opposition party⁷, parliament experience, membership in the parliament board, membership in an oversight committee, as well as the attitude towards evaluation. On the parliament level, the models include the size of the parliament, if the canton/federation knows a general evaluation clause⁸ in the constitution, and the institutional position of the parliament⁹ towards the government.¹⁰

Since the data is structured in three different levels (MP, policy field, and parliament), I use a multi-level model in order to conduct the analysis (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002). In

⁶The covariance matrix of the policy fields' attributes is illustrated in the Appendix (Table 4.4).

⁷The canton of Appenzell Innerrhoden is characterized by a high percentage of nonpartisan MPs and government members, which however share common values (Vatter, 2002, 183). Since the members of opposition parties could not have really been determined, Appenzell Innerrhoden was excluded from the analysis.

⁸An evaluation clause is a passage in the bill that usually urges the government to evaluate a policy after a certain time. General evaluation clauses in the cantonal/federal constitution do not refer to a specific policy, but demand the government to frequently evaluate its policies (Bussmann, 2005, 97-99).

⁹Kaiss (2010) has built an index in order to identify the institutional position of parliament towards the government. The index is based on the three main functions of the parliament: election, legislation, and oversight. From the 17 indicators, I only included those that are relevant for parliamentary oversight.

¹⁰The operationalization is summarized in the Appendix (Table 4.5).

doing so, a random intercept model tests variables on all three levels. In addition, the outcome of the endogenous variable is binary, which is why I will use a logistic regression model. The following three level model is used to estimate the likelihood to demand an evaluation with a parliamentary request:

$$Y_{ijk} = \gamma_{000} + v_{0k} + u_{0jk} + e_{ijk} \quad (1)$$

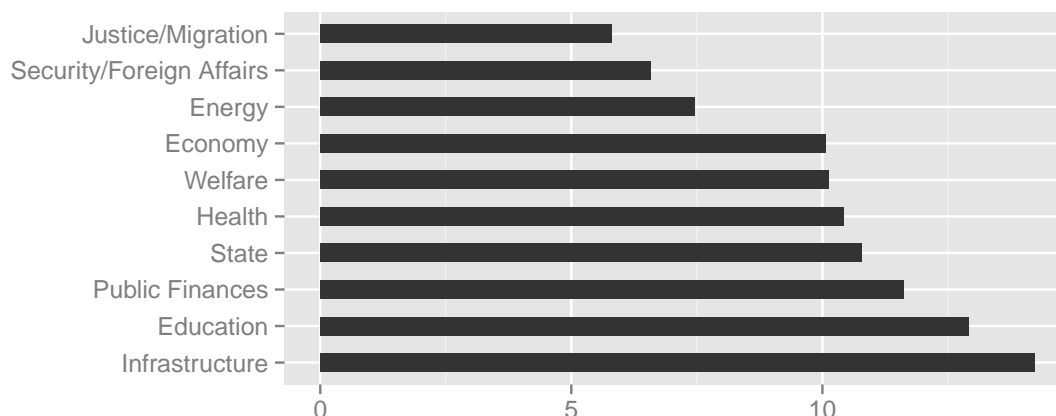
where Y is the likelihood to demand an evaluation at the levels i (MP), j (parliament) and k (policy field), while γ_{000} stands for the random intercepts. In addition, v_{0k} as well as u_{0jk} refer to the overall regression slopes, and e_{ijk} the random residual error terms at the three levels.

4.6 Results

During the survey, the MPs were asked whether they submitted a parliamentary request in order to examine a state measure in the last four years. If so, they had to specify in which policy field they proposed the parliamentary request. In total, 717 MPs (49% of the sample) submitted a parliamentary request in order to demand an evaluation. Although this percentage is relatively high, one has to consider that MPs can submit parliamentary requests by other members or with a whole committee. Moreover, not all parliamentary requests are successfully submitted to the government, since they do not find a majority in the parliament.

According to Figure 4.3, the distribution of evaluation demand differs highly across the policy fields. The MPs have most often submitted parliamentary requests in the policy fields of infrastructure, education, and public finances. In contrast, the fewest parliamentary requests were submitted in the policy fields of justice/migration, security/foreign affairs, and energy. In doing so, MPs have different preferences in the selection of the policy field. While MPs from right parties indicated to demand more evaluations in the policy field of justice/migration and economy, MPs from left parties proposed more requests in the policy field of welfare. Compared to the findings of previous studies on

Figure 4.3: Variation of Evaluation Across Policy Fields



In the last four years, in which policy fields did you propose a parliamentary request in order to examine a state measure with regard to implementation and impact?

evaluation activity across policy fields, MPs tend to demand more evaluations in the field of infrastructure and public finances. In contrast, less evaluations are requested in the area of economy.

In order to investigate the variation of evaluations across policy fields, four different models are tested (Table 4.1). Model 1 tests the explanatory strength of the policy fields' attribute delegation. The model illustrates that the extent of delegation of a policy field has a significant influence on the probability to demand an evaluation in a policy field. In addition, the level of salience and the budget of a policy field also influence the parliamentary demand for an evaluation. The same is true for several variables on the individual level. In doing so, they indicate that MPs demand evaluations in order to fulfill their oversight function. Members of oversight committees and opposition parties have a significantly higher probability to demand evaluations. Moreover, the age, the experience of an MP as well as the membership in a parliamentary board also increase the likelihood for a parliamentary request. Regarding the party ideology, pole parties (Social Democrats, Greens, Swiss People's Party) also seem to demand more evaluations. In contrast, factors

Table 4.1: Individual, Policy Field, and Parliament Random Effects Models

	<i>Dependent variable: Parliamentary Request</i>			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Policy Field Level				
Delegation	0.094** (0.045)			
Delegation × Science		0.283** (0.111)		
Legitimation			0.285* (0.165)	
Legitimation × Science				0.941*** (0.336)
Salience	-0.337*** (0.065)	-0.384*** (0.072)	-0.400*** (0.087)	-0.405*** (0.074)
Budget	0.004*** (0.001)	0.004*** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)	0.003*** (0.001)
Individual Level				
Age	0.010*** (0.003)	0.010*** (0.003)	0.010*** (0.003)	0.010*** (0.003)
Men	0.042 (0.060)	0.042 (0.060)	0.042 (0.060)	0.042 (0.060)
Education	0.012 (0.012)	0.012 (0.012)	0.012 (0.012)	0.012 (0.012)
Center Party	-0.155*** (0.056)	-0.155*** (0.056)	-0.155*** (0.056)	-0.155*** (0.056)
Opposition	0.176*** (0.063)	0.176*** (0.063)	0.176*** (0.063)	0.176*** (0.063)
Experience	0.021*** (0.003)	0.021*** (0.003)	0.021*** (0.003)	0.021*** (0.003)
Parliament Board	0.156** (0.073)	0.156** (0.073)	0.156** (0.073)	0.156** (0.073)
Oversight Committee	0.199*** (0.055)	0.199*** (0.055)	0.199*** (0.055)	0.199*** (0.055)
Evaluation Attitude	0.493*** (0.046)	0.493*** (0.046)	0.493*** (0.046)	0.493*** (0.046)
Parliament Level				
Parliament Size	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)	-0.002 (0.001)
Evaluation Clause	0.028 (0.108)	0.028 (0.106)	0.027 (0.109)	0.027 (0.108)
Institutional Position	0.247 (0.310)	0.250 (0.310)	0.243 (0.311)	0.248 (0.310)
Intercept	-4.734*** (0.307)	-4.717*** (0.307)	-4.673*** (0.311)	-4.653*** (0.309)
Residual Variance				
Between ϕ (Parliaments)	0.213	0.213	0.214	0.214
Between ϕ (Policy Fields)	0.236	0.233	0.238	0.231
Observations	14,040	14,040	14,040	14,040
Log Likelihood	-4,839.194	-4,838.170	-4,839.889	-4,837.481
Wald χ^2	291.25***	293.10***	289.41***	294.56***

Note: * p<0.1, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01; Regression coefficients shown with robust standard biases in parentheses. N=1404 MPs, 10 Policy Fields, 27 Parliaments.

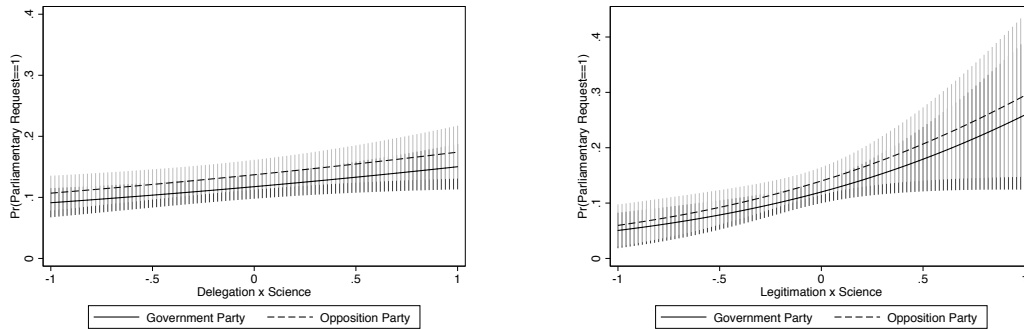
on the parliament level do not seem to influence the likelihood of demanding an evaluation. Model 2 includes the interaction term between delegation and science. The model shows that the effect is not only more significant, but also has a higher influence on the probability to demand an evaluation. The more evaluations are delegated in a policy field and the closer the policy field is to science, the more likely a member of parliament will demand an evaluation. Model 3 includes the variable legitimization. In contrast to delegation, the need to legitimate public activities only has a weakly significant influence to submit a parliamentary request in a policy field. However, if we build the interaction term with science, the effect gets substantially stronger and also becomes highly significant (Model 4).

The results suggest that accountability seems to influence the extent of parliamentary oversight in the policy fields. First, the policy fields' attributes delegation and legitimization influence the MP's likelihood to demand an evaluation in a policy field. Based on the analysis, we can argue that cooperative governance may increase the need for accountability, since the parliamentary oversight is more difficult to fulfill (delegation) respectively more strongly needed (legitimation). Second, the analysis also provides evidence that the closeness to science plays an important role as an interacting variable. The closer a policy field is to science, the more likely a MP will demand an evaluation. This finding is consistent with the literature on the use of knowledge in the policy process, which proclaims that the attributes of the administrative structure of a policy sector influences knowledge shifts (Radaelli, 1995; Daviter, 2015). Even though MPs have incentives to demand an evaluation by the need for accountability in a policy field, they might more likely submit a parliamentary request if they have the impression that there are enough specialists that can provide evaluations.¹¹

These findings are important for understanding parliamentary oversight across policy fields. The study shows that not only institutional settings influence the level of account-

¹¹However, it is also argued in literature that science may potentially raise more conflicts of interest and thus lead to more parliamentary oversight, respectively to a higher evaluation demand (Brown, 2009). Though, the attributes science and conflictivity do not correlate with each other (see Table 4.4).

Figure 4.4: Predicted Probabilities to Demand an Evaluation for Legitimation



Note: Predicted probabilities to demand an evaluation with a parliamentary request, as a function of the interaction between delegation and science as well as legitimation and science for MPs of governmental parties (full-line) and oppositional parties (dashed-line). The values are calculated for MPs with the following attributes: men, membership in an oversight committee and in the parliament board. All other individual and parliamentary variables are at the median.

ability, but also the nature of a policy field. Although individual attributes influence the MP's probability to demand evaluations, the effect for the policy fields' attributes is still higher. Figure 4.4 illustrates that the effect for legitimation and delegation is stronger than for being a member in an oppositional party. While a MP's likelihood to demand an evaluation increased by 5.1% in the interaction between delegation and science, the probability to demand an evaluation in a policy field with a high need for legitimation increases to more than 26.5%. In contrast, the effects for parliament experience, partisanship, or member of an oversight committee are all smaller, even though significant.

However, the study has three limitations. First, most of the relevant data has been gathered through a parliamentary survey. Although this approach provides a comprehensive overview of the parliamentary demand for evaluations, survey data always entails methodical problems that question the analytical power of the sample (Bundi et al., 2016). In doing so, problems of self-selection and misreporting are likely to appear, even if the measurement errors should be distributed equally across the policy fields. Second a generalization of policy fields' attributes is challenging. It is unclear whether the policy fields' attributes are constant over the cantonal and the federal level, since there are no studies investigating this problem. Last and most important, the concepts delegation and legiti-

mation might correlate with each other, which the empirical measurement indeed suggests. For instance, public services might especially be delegated in those policy fields in which the need for legitimation is particularly high, since the agencies want to implement the policies with the most important stakeholders in policy networks. Moreover, policy fields that are particularly close to science might receive more parliamentary oversight, as they are the ones most likely to be delegated to non-state actors and have a higher need for legitimation.

4.7 Implications for Other Countries and Oversight Institutions

Although the political system certainly has some particularities, the Swiss case is by far not disentailed from other countries. The use of parliamentary requests as an oversight tool can also be observed in other countries, as discussed in section 4.3. Moreover, several studies recently showed that evaluations are also frequently demanded by other parliaments ([Speer et al., 2015](#); [Zwaan et al., 2016](#)). However, this does not mean that the findings of the analysis can simply be generalized, but that the dynamics detected in Switzerland should not be understated as the product of a specific context.

First of all, all parliaments have incentives for parliamentary oversight in temporary democracies. Previous studies have shown that the MPs want to control the executive due to the chain of delegation. This is not only true for parliamentary democracies ([Saalfeld, 2000](#); [Strøm et al., 2006](#)), but also for countries with presidential systems ([Kiewiet and McCubbins, 1991](#)). Furthermore, several studies show that MPs attempt to oversee the executive regardless of their oversight institutions ([Yamamoto, 2007](#); [Winzen, 2012](#)). However, although parliamentary requests and questions might be widely used as an oversight tool in other countries, their use might still differ according to the context of countries [Rozenberg et al. \(2011\)](#).

Countries differ not only in how they have institutionalized their parliaments, but also in how they implement their policies. On the one hand, parliaments might have other instruments for parliamentary oversight. In contrast to Switzerland, those institutions for

parliamentary oversight could either focus on other oversight mechanisms or have better resources for monitoring and reporting. On the other hand, the way of how policies are implemented might vary significantly across countries. As a consequence, policy networks might be more strongly developed in some countries than in others. However, these different settings do not change the mechanism of how attributes of policy fields shape parliamentary oversight. Even if MPs use other instruments (committees, hearings etc.) in order to control the government, they will still rather focus on those policy fields, which have a higher need for accountability. Several studies suggest that MPs focus on specific policy fields for accountability reasons. While [Winzen \(2013\)](#) shows how European integration has an influence on national oversight institutions, since governmental parliamentary groups want to enhance policy participation, [Den Boer et al. \(2008\)](#) demonstrate that security policies are less investigated by the European Parliament, as the field raises fewer legitimacy concerns.

Hence, the findings of this article can be applicable to other countries with other oversight mechanisms. More particularly, there are three different implications for other countries. First, parliaments can have weak oversight institutions, but their members might still find a way to fulfill their oversight function. The Swiss case illustrates how MPs use parliamentary requests in order to oversee the agencies. Second, policy fields differ in their attributes as they do not only have to deal with different policies, but they also implement them in varied ways. While some fields delegate more policies to private organizations, other policy fields lack in political legitimation. This does not mean that these attributes converge across countries. Other countries - depending on their institutional and traditional settings - might have another distribution of those attributes across the policy fields. Third, those attributes have a significant influence on the need of accountability. Hence, in many countries MPs will have a distinct perception of what policy areas should be overseen more intensively than others. The findings presented in this article suggest that the effects of policy fields' attributes on parliamentary oversight are diverse, but clearly observable.

4.8 Conclusion

The article offers empirical evidence that parliaments execute their oversight task variably across policy fields. In doing so, the analysis shows that MPs interpret their oversight role differently, since they demand evaluations more frequently in some policy fields than in others. In those policy fields where more public activities are delegated to private organizations, MPs are more likely to demand an evaluation. The same is true if the need for legitimation is particularly high in a policy field. Both effects increase with the policy field's closeness to science.

The findings contribute to the literature on accountability, parliamentary oversight, as well as comparative public policy. First, the analysis highlights the importance of distinguishing between different levels of accountability across policy fields. It is evident that we should study the nature of policy fields and how their attributes affect accountability. Second, the findings highlight the importance of studying parliamentary oversight across policy fields, since policy fields vary in their level of accountability. Using the example of policy evaluation, the study provides an example that parliaments execute their oversight function unequally across policy fields. Last and most important, the article has important implications for comparative public policy literature. In the 1970s, [Lowi \(1972\)](#) already argued that policies determine politics. He argues that not the actual outcomes, but the expectations on what the outcomes can be, influence the decision-making process. In contrast to Lowi, this study shows that policy can also influence the political actors, since they execute oversight differently. Hence, the article contributes to public policy literature by using a comparative approach to understand differences of policy fields. Although in-depth studies on the specific policy sectors are important, a systematic comparison between the policy fields must be made in order to advance public policy research.

These findings therefore point to the potential of policy fields' attributes for public policy research. Although the importance of policy fields are not new in public policy research ([Baumgartner and Jones, 2010](#)), many scholars have so far neglected the influ-

ence of policy fields' attributes on politics and have only given attention to institutional differences of policy areas. Although the Swiss case has some peculiarities, the study has important implications for other parliaments, since parliamentary oversight can be characterized by various institutions. Depending on the perceived need of accountability, these focus on different policy fields. Further research yet needs to explore how policy fields' attributes develop and how they shape politics. I believe this study provides a helpful starting point for such research.

Appendix

Table 4.2: Definition of Policy Fields

Policy Fields	Specification
State	People, Political Institutions, Cantons, Municipalities, Church
Education	School System, Sciences, Research, Culture
Security/Foreign Affairs	Military, Civil Defense, Police, International Relations
Public Finances	Taxes, Subsidies, Cuts
Energy	Electricity, Water Power, Nuclear Energy, Renewable Energy
Infrastructure	Building, Housing, Environment, Telecommunication Private and Public Transport, Spatial Planning
Health	Healthcare Provision, Food, Veterinary, Health Promotion and Prevention
Welfare	Family, Social Insurance, Social Assistance
Economy	Labor, Services, Industry, Trade, Craft, Agriculture, Forestry
Justice/Migration	Civil and Criminal Law, Immigration, Asylum, Integration, Naturalization

Table 4.3: Definition of Policy Fields' Attributes

Attribute	Definition
Delegation	Delegation is an act where an administration unit that is responsible for a public service delegates the execution of the public service to a private organization.
Legitimacy	Legitimation is the moral conviction that an administration unit produces public activities, which are valid and eligible to solve a social problem.
Conflictivity	The level of conflict reflects the degree of incompatibility of basic beliefs of competing coalitions over policy goals in a policy field.
Science	Closeness to science describes in what extent scientific research deals with issues of a policy field.
Salience	Salience of a policy field is the quantity of attention, which policy issues of a policy field get from external actors and how these actors value the need for action that has to be taken in a policy field.

Table 4.4: Covariance Matrix of Policy Fields' Attributes

Variable	Delegation	Legitimation	Salience	Conflictivity	Science
Delegation	1.000				
Legitimation	0.769	1.000			
Salience	0.270	0.551	1.000		
Conflictivity	0.209	0.565	0.950	1.000	
Science	0.830	0.636	0.210	0.169	1.000

Table 4.5: Operationalization of the Variables

Variable	Operationalization	Source	ER	HYP
Dependent Variable				
Parliamentary Request	In the last four years, in which policy fields did you propose a parliamentary request in order to examine a state measure with regard to implementation and impact? Categorical: Policy Fields (see Table 1)	Parliament Survey		
Policy Field Level				
Delegation	On a scale from 1 to 10, where do you position the extent of delegated public services in the following policy fields during the last four years? Continuous scale, standardized: -2 (small) - 2 (large)	Expert Survey	+	C
Legitimation	On a scale from 1 to 10, where do you position the need to legitimate public activities in the following policy fields during the last four years? Continuous scale, standardized: -2 (weak) - 2 (strong)	Expert Survey	+	C
Salience	On a scale from 1 to 10, where do you position the salience of the following policy fields during the last four years? Continuous scale, standardized: -2 (inconspicuous) - 2 (salient)	Expert Survey		
Conflictivity	On a scale from 1 to 10, where do you position the level of conflict in the following policy fields during the last four years? Continuous scale, standardized: -2 (consensual) - 2 (conflictive)	Expert Survey		
Science	On a scale from 1 to 10, where do you position the closeness to science of the following policy fields during the last four years? Continuous scale, standardized: -2 (distant) - 2 (close)	Expert Survey		
Budget	Public Expenditure of a Policy Field Continuous scale; square root	EFV 2014		

Variable	Operationalization	Source	ER	HYP
Individual Level				
Age	Age of a MPs in years Continuous scale	Parliament Survey		
Sex	Dummy: 0 for male, 1 for female	Parliament Survey		
Education	What is your highest degree of education? Continuous scale: 1 (compulsory school) - 8 (university)	Parliament Survey		
Center Party	Party membership in a center party (FDP, The Liberals, Christian Democratic People's Party, Green Liberal Party, Conservative Democratic Party, Christian Social Party, Evangelical People's Party Dummy: 0 for other party, 1 for center party	Parliament Survey		
Opposition	Party membership in an oppositional party Dummy: 0 for governmental party, 1 for opposition party	Parliament Survey		
Parliament Experience	How many years of experience do you have in a communal, cantonal and/or national parliament? Continuous scale	Parliament Survey		
Membership Board	Membership in the parliament office Dummy: 0 for no, 1 for yes	Parliament Survey		
Oversight Committee	Membership in an oversight committee Dummy: 0 for no, 1 for yes	Parliament Survey		
Evaluation Attitude	Index of three dimensions: - During the last four years, how many times did you read an evaluation summary? - Evaluations are a useful instrument for me as a member of parliament. - Whenever possible, my political decisions are supported by evaluation or other studies. Categorical scale: 1 (never/strongly disagree) - 4 (frequently/strongly agree); square	Parliament Survey		

Variable	Operationalization	Source	ER	HYP
Parliament Level				
Size of Parliament	Size of parliament Continuous scale	Badac 2011, supp.		
Evaluation Clause	General evaluation clause in the cantonal/federal constitution Dummy: 0 for no, 1 for yes	Horber 2007, supp.		
Institutional Position	Institutional position of the parliament towards the government Continuous scale	Kaiss 2010, supp.		
ER = Expected relationship; HYP = Hypothesis corroborated (C) or proven false (F); supp = Data supplemented				

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